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HESTER WARWICK;

OR,

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

A Tale of the

OLD WORLD AND THE NEW.

4194

BY

MRS. ETHELINDA CUSTARD.

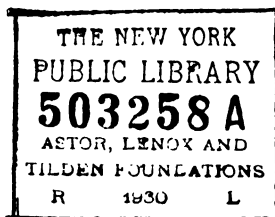
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TO
REV. JOHN NEWTON BROWN, D.D.,
[Historical Editor of the American Baptist Publication Society,]

THIS WORK IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated,

AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE



FOR HIS

CHRISTIAN COUNSELS AND NUMEROUS ACTS OF KINDNESS TO

THE AUTHOR.

man,



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER AND FASHION, - - - - -	11
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER II.

A TALE OF MIDNIGHT, - - - - -	17
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

THE WIDOW AND MOTHER, - - - - -	23
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY TRAITS, - - - - -	27
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

ERRORS AND INCONSISTENCIES, - - - - -	41
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

INCIDENTS—HESTER'S MARRIAGE, - - - - -	50
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE, - - - - -	59
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW VIEWS AND THEIR RESULTS, - - - - -	65
--	----

CHAPTER IX.

SEEKING THE TRUTH—THE PARTY, - - - - -	73
--	----

CHAPTER X.	
FARTHER SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN TREASURES, - - - -	88
CHAPTER XI.	
CHURCH MEETINGS—HESTER'S BAPTISM, - - - -	98
CHAPTER XII.	
PERSECUTION, - - - - -	106
CHAPTER XIII.	
WORKING FOR THE MASTER, - - - - -	120
CHAPTER XIV.	
INCIDENTS, - - - - -	125
CHAPTER XV.	
A SINNER CONVICTED, - - - - -	137
CHAPTER XVI.	
PROGRESS OF FAITH—RECONCILIATION, - - - -	150
CHAPTER XVII.	
BELIEF—BAPTISM—TEMPTATION, - - - - -	166
CHAPTER XVIII.	
ON THE ATLANTIC, - - - - -	173
CHAPTER XIX.	
LAST HOURS—NEW SORROWS, - . - - -	181
CHAPTER XX.	
PERPLEXITIES—SORROWS, - - - - -	191

Contents.

vii

CHAPTER XXI.	
THE FIRE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, - - - - -	205
CHAPTER XXII.	
CHANGING SCENES—CHARACTERISTICS, - - - - -	215
CHAPTER XXIII.	
TIDINGS FROM HOME, - - - - -	228
CHAPTER XXIV.	
NEW PHASES OF LIFE, - - - - -	238
CHAPTER XXV.	
THE SECOND MARRIAGE—CHOLERA SCENES, - - - - -	249
CHAPTER XXVI.	
REMOVAL—CORRESPONDENCE, - - - - -	256

INTRODUCTION.

TO THE PUBLIC.—“Truth is stranger than fiction.” The incidents recorded in this volume are not, as is often written, “*founded* on facts,” but they are *real unvarnished facts* themselves. Many more as striking as those in this book portrayed, might have been written, but they have been suppressed, lest they should swell the volume to an undue size. The names only are assumed—some of them are real, but they will be readily recognized. The places, also, are some of them concealed, while others are not. All that is necessary to lead the reader into the investigation of truth, has been left in its natural form. The object of the work is to show the power of Gospel TRUTH, and of saving, sustaining GRACE under every circumstance in life.

May the Holy Spirit bless the contents of this volume to the hearts of its readers.

THE AUTHOR.

April, 1858.

HESTER WARWICK;

OR,

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER AND FASHION.

It is the hour of morning prayer, and within one of the princely mansions which tower above the noble river Thames, are gathered the family of Lionel Warwick. It is a balmy morning in June, and the windows are thrown open, revealing one of the loveliest landscapes beneath the sky. The lady of Warwick has seated herself on the low divan in the recess, and six lovely children surround her with a decorum of behavior suited to the hour. The husband and father has drawn his arm-chair to the table, and the ponderous gilded Bible lies open before him at the first of Kings and the third chapter. Then in silence all kneel, while the master of

the household reads from the prayer-book of the Church of England, the "Lord's Prayer," followed by petitions like these :—"Since it is of thy mercy, O gracious Father, that another day is added to our lives, we here dedicate both our souls and our bodies to Thee and Thy service, in a sober, righteous and godly life. In which resolution do Thou, O merciful God, confirm and strengthen us," &c. "Give us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may be effectually restrained from sin—make us afraid to offend Thee." "Keep in our minds a lively remembrance of that Great Day in which we must give a strict account of our thoughts, words and actions, and according to the works done in the body be eternally rewarded or punished," &c. Most beautiful petitions these, and expressive of the wants of an immortal but fallen nature. Were they uttered by truthful lips, faithful reporters of the heart's emotions, or were they but forms without life—voices from the graves of other and holier beings? We shall see.

"What shall we do about those cards the Morton's sent last evening?" said Mrs. Warwick to her husband, a few moments after the scene just described.

"Oh, the fete at Malmsbury Castle? Why, go, of course. Have you replied to the cards?"

"I have not, for though you know I would like to attend, yet Henry and Emma are not yet strong

enough to leave with Jane, as she is so inexperienced, and if they should have a relapse, they might never recover."

"True, this fever is a dangerous visitor, and perhaps I had better remain near home for a few days."

"No, Warwick, it would never do for neither of us to go, the Norton's would never forgive us. So just reply in excuse for me, but acceptance for yourself."

And ere the voice of these solemn petitions had scarcely died upon his lips, the man of fashion has forgotten them. He uttered them, and his duty was done ; now he turns back to the world, to enjoy its pleasures just as freely as if there were no God, and no futurity of unending happiness or misery.

The grand old pile of ruins, Malmsbury Castle, stands upon an eminence fronting the river, and opposite the town of "Henley-on-Thames," in which resided Lionel Warwick and his family. The name of Malmsbury belongs solely to a race of the past, and this relict of antiquity is but a resort for the pleasure-seeking public, and an office of inspection. Families from town, city and country, choose it as the resort for their summer festivities, and Malmsbury Castle is the temple of pleasure.

The fashionable patricians of Henley were alone favored with cards of invitation to this day's gaities, for "the Nortons" were of the peerage. Early in the day the gay companies were seen on horseback,

or in their richly liveried carriages hastening to the scene of amusement. Lionel Warwick received his charger from the hands of his servant, and bidding a playful farewell to his lady and little ones as they stood in the embowered piazza, mounted and rode away with his friends.

And now the groups are gathered, servants in livery have awaited their arrival, and are ready with their obsequious attentions. In the spacious echoing halls, the tables are spread with luxuries innumerable, and the rich masses of silver plate vie with the sparkling cut glass, ruddy with the juices of the grape. Pass to the rooms. Here are the card-tables—who can tell what results may attend their use this night! Come to these broad saloons—dilapidated as they are, the hands of taste have decorated them for the dance, and old Time will not look grimly around upon his trespassers, for they have made him seem young once more. Look around from these quaint old windows, upon the lawn below, and peer far out through those shaded parks. In those arched groves, lovers are straying, companions are greeting, the low whisper, the loud laugh, the merry jest, the senseless titter, float upon the breeze in their varied tones. Equestrians are mounted on their horses or their donkeys, numbers are at “ball and bat,” others at “battledore and shuttlecock.” Within, you hear the *oaths* of the gentlemen, and the

ejaculations of the ladies as they are engaged in the plays of "snap dragon," or "hunt the slipper."

And now the feasting has commenced. Beef, venison and game, pastries, cakes, confectionery, pine-apples, oranges, and ices, raisins and nuts, and wine, have been pressed into the service of the table. Hours go by, but the eating and the drinking have not terminated.

Night has drawn its curtain over the scene of festivity, and many are gathered within the walls of the saloon for cotillions, quadrilles, waltz, and gallopedes, while airy music measures their steps. Others are seated at the card tables, while wine and punch go round, and masquerade occupies the splendidly illuminated parlors, with their antique windows and walls. The small hours of the night come and depart, and fathers and mothers are still there, listening to, or participating in the fascinating song, the giddy dance, or the laugh of senseless glee. Morning draws nigh, and Lionel Warwick suddenly remembers that his little ones may need their father's aid, that his wife has borne her burden of care and anxiety alone. He rises, and calling for his steed, mounts and leaves the gay scene behind.

Ah, man of the world, was it to spend thy hours in scenes like this thou didst kneel and ask for grace and strength? And yet, thou art not alone—thousands like thee, in the brightness of the morning,

kneel to adore in words the God whose service they forget or despise ; thousands return from scenes like this, to repeat the prayers of the church, and lie down as if all their duty on earth was done, and their heaven secured forever.

CHAPTER II.

A TALE OF MIDNIGHT.

It is night, and the wife of Lionel Warwick enters her nursery, and gathers around her the little ones who call her mother—all but the two little invalids, scarcely convalescent from an attack of disease—these lie in their little cribs, and their mother sits near by them. Those who are well recite after her the articles of Faith. “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,” &c. All kneeling, the mother reads an Evening Prayer, and also the Lord’s Prayer—perhaps, also, some simple verse, as “Now I lay me down to sleep,” &c., or, “Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.” Her duty now is all performed, and conscience, trained to the requisitions of the Mother Church, asks no more, and the nurses attend the children to their rest.

Night slowly marches to its noon. The mother looks out from her chamber across the dark Thames, and the lights are still gleaming from the castle windows. She wishes she were there. She wishes Lionel would return. It is so solemn, so lonely, this

night-watching, this listening to every sound in the stillness of night, this lingering state of expectancy, with no one to share it with her, and her little ones so ill.

Occasionally, a woman of fashion is a loving wife and devoted mother, and Mrs. Warwick is one of these so very rarely found. The lamp burns brightly upon her table, and the door of her children's apartment opens widely into her own ; but she is wakeful and desires no sleep until her husband returns. She throws herself upon her bed without disrobing, to rest her frame, and listen for the first note of childhood's wail. The low breathing of her infants in their slumber, and the loud snoring of the nurses, are the only sounds heard in the stillness of the night, and without, nature is calmly asleep beneath the canopy of heaven.

At last the latch-key turns in the door, and the well-known step of Mr. Warwick ascends the stairs ; but heavily and slowly it comes, striking each carpeted stair in the assent. "What a pity," says the wife and mother to herself, "that Warwick should have taken too much punch, and the children so unwell." But as he enters she resolves she "will not reproach him, as no doubt he could not help it." He, too, is silent, lest he should waken the little slumberers in the next room, and slowly throwing off his coat and vest, approaches the bed. "I'm

awake, Lionel," now speaks the wife, "don't be foolish, give me your hand and I'll help you." She reaches out her hand, the loud clock on Henley church strikes out the chime of twelve, and throughout the house sounds the blast of a mighty rushing wind, as if closing every door and window with a sudden clang. But Lionel Warwick, where is he? Gone, vanished. Nay, he has not been here. The frightened nurses and the children are awake, and in terror inquire, "What is the matter, madam?" "Mother, what was that?" The strong-minded, iron-nerved mother has presence of mind, and she calmly replies, "I suppose it's the wind, nothing but the wind—go to sleep again." They are quieted, but she who has soothed them, clasps her hands, and sinking back on her pillow, exclaims almost audibly, "The Lord have mercy on me! but this is no imagination!" She lies awe-struck and wondering, for a time, and then rises to see if reality has not been the cause; if, indeed, her highly-wrought brain has not imagined all this. But not a door or a window has been moved, not a vestige of her husband's attire is to be seen, not a servant has left his room, and "what could it have been, God only knows. Perhaps something has happened to Warwick," is the mental exclamation of the watcher. An undefinable dread takes possession of her mind, and she looks out from her window to catch the first glimpse of

her absent lord. Again that solemn chime peals out—it is the hour of one, and he comes not yet. Never was night so long. In waiting and watching how wearily pass the hours, so fleet when rolling by as unconsciously we rest in happiness and peace. Hark ! 'tis the tramp of the iron-hoofed steed that breaks upon her ear, and this time it is Lionel Warwick, returned in safety and health to his own door. The private key has admitted him now, and rousing his groom, asleep on the lounge, he ascends with lively steps to greet the wife who is waiting him.

“ Why, Clara ! are you up at this hour ? Why did you not retire ? Are the children worse ? ”

• “ Oh, no, but I was wakeful, and thought I would wait for you.”

Not a word concerning what had alarmed her passed the lips of the wife, and for a long time these companions talked over the incidents of the fete, until, as morning grows gray in the east, they fall into heavy slumbers. And so ends a day and night of *pleasure*.

It is just one week from the night of watching and alarm, the night of revelry and dissipation. Lionel Warwick has for a few days past remained at home, from an apparently slight indisposition. He walks about his house, reads a little, lies down occasionally, and has but very little appetite for food. To-day

he has been worse, and the physician is here, and a cousin of the family. The evening is spent in the usual chit-chat, and as the patient is unwilling to retire, he is allowed to sit up in his arm chair.

"Clara, I think if I had some of your nice gruel once more, I would go to bed, but it is so late I hate to ask you for it, and nobody can make it to please me as well as yourself."

"Certainly, Lionel, you know I will make it, or anything else you wish." And the good wife hastens below to prepare the nourishment. It occupies but a little time, and she is ascending the stairs with the smoking bowl. The chimes of the Henley church have commenced the hour of twelve, and she is met at the stair-top by her cousin.

"Give *me* the bowl, Clara, I will take it in for you," says the friend, extending her hand.

"No, thank you, Lionel always prefers to have me wait on him when he is sick."

"*Do* give it me, Clara, and come quickly," is the agitated reply.

"Why, what is the matter, Sarah, is Lionel worse?"

Just then, the last chime of midnight attracts her ear, and a rushing vision of that midnight hour of loneliness and watching, sweeps before her mind's eye, and she adds almost with a scream, "is he *dead*?"

"Yes, Clara, he is gone, *just* gone."

As the words fall upon her ear, the stricken wife gives one shriek, and falls senseless upon the floor.

Truly, this is a house of sorrow. The husband and father is suddenly cut down in the prime of his days. His wife is a widow, his children are fatherless!

Long years after the scenes above recorded had passed away, and the children of Lionel Warwick had attained to maturity, did their mother repeat to them the story of that night of warning, and of that other night of dreadful reality. Whether the mystery which shrouds the former, was ever explained in any other way than by the results of the latter, we do not know. We give the legend as told us forty years after, by one of the daughters, who had heard it many times. She represents her mother as being very far from superstitious, and as a woman remarkable for her matter-of-fact disposition.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURIAL.—THE WIDOW AND THE MOTHER.

THREE days have passed, and the funeral pageant is at the door of the late Lionel Warwick ; waiting to convey the dead to its last resting place. Here are mutes with their muffled standards, the pall and the hearse with its nodding plumes, the jet black horses, the mourning coach, the scarfs and hoods, and all the paraphernalia of fashionable grief, and a large attendance of fashionable friends. Onward the pageant moves, the dead and the living. The cemetery is reached and its wide gate is thrown open, and the clergyman stands with his uncovered head and his prayer-book in hand, waiting to receive the solemn crowd. It is here, and preceding it to the grave he reads aloud, slowly and solemnly, the triumphant declaration of our ascended Lord, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," &c., &c. Then follows the lesson, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept," &c., &c. Slowly the coffin is lowered into its narrow bed amid the sobs of the widow, and the cries of the little ones, for their

"lost papa," and while the earth falls so chillingly and despairingly over the closed tenement of the dead, above all rises the clear solemn voice of the clergyman, repeating, "Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God in His wise Providence to take out of this world the soul of our deceased brother, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come through Jesus Christ, at whose second coming the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him, shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body." Can anything be more consoling? Ah, these are blessed truths, they are glorious doctrines—would they were never misapplied.

The service is over, and the remains of the man of the world and the devotee of fashion and wealth are deposited in their last resting place; and though the widow weeps, she doubts not the eternal safety of the departed soul, for had he not been born within the pale of the church, baptised into its holy communion, lived and died in its faith, and been buried with its sacred rites?

Mrs. Warwick returned to her darkened home, the sole guardian and guide of six fatherless children. No woman considered in a mere worldly point of view could have presented a better model of a mother;

leaving out the religion of the heart, no children could have been more strictly trained to the performance of duty. Few ladies in England equaled her in the possession of grace and dignity, and in the exercise of these she presided over her household.

With uncompromising firmness of government, she always exacted implicit obedience from her children and servants, and a glance from her eye was always sufficient to restrain, often to guide. The speech, manners, movements, food, dress, studies and companions of her children, all came under the closest supervision, while at the same time no department of household affairs escaped her scrutiny. The office of a mother and the mistress of a family, requires the full development of the mental faculties, and those of the highest order are in the most frequent exercise. So thoroughly ought the mind of woman to be cultivated and disciplined.

Mrs. Warwick was, as has been premised, a member of the established church, and devoted in her whole heart to its observances. Born within its pale, considering all outside of it as condemned heretics, and ignorant of everything relating to other denominations, she could not do otherwise than train her children in the way *she thought* they should go. And this she did with a faithfulness which plainly proved her dependence on the observances of the church for eternal salvation.

When the time which the rules of fashionable life allowed for mourning and seclusion from society had passed, Mrs. Warwick again made her appearance in the circles of high life. Again were too many of the precious hours of the day passed in the exchange of fashionable calls, and her evenings at the card-table, the dance, or the theatre, and yet, no morning nor evening was suffered to pass without instructing her children in their *religious duties*, or gathering her family for the reading of the prayers of the church. The lateness of the hour at which she returned from her nightly amusements, never prevented her reading a chapter or a prayer before retiring to rest. *Christian* mother, are you thus faithful?

Such was an English mother of whom it is written. Do not mothers lay the foundation on which the character of a life-time is built? Does not the education of childhood mold the prejudices and the religious predilections of the head, and give to life its peculiar coloring of circumstance? Then Hester Warwick, one of those six fatherless children who were left with the mother here described, shall exhibit in her life-history the influences and counter-influences of teaching childhood the attempt to "serve God and mammon."

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY TRAITS.

A WINTER has been passed in the rounds of gaiety, and the widow of Lionel Warwick has removed, with her family, from Henley-on-Thames, the scene of her marriage pleasures and her bereavements, to a pleasant house in Oxfordshire. It is upon an estate which is part of her maternal inheritance, and is a delightful situation, realizing to the view all the beauty of an old English home, with its delightful parks, verdant slopes and lawns, beautified by smiling lakelets. The society around is sufficiently aristocratic withal, to gratify even the high-born and stately dame who watches so keenly over the young beings *who call her mother*, lest they should descend to any companionship beneath their rank. She has brought these six fatherless ones here to obliterate, if possible, the memory of their first grief, but even the paradisaical charms which invest this new home, cannot efface from the mind of one of them at least, a grief stronger than childhood usually cherishes, even for the dearest of those lost to their love. It is the little

Hester, once the pet and plaything of her father, who now for months after he has left the world, still looks for him to return. Ah, what a day was that when she was led to the side of his cold, lifeless form, and saw that the eyes which had always looked love to hers were closed, the lips sealed tightly, and the voice which had so often addressed her by the most endearing names, would not answer when she called "papa, papa, I want to see you." Ah, what a grief was hers, distressing to behold. It was an *abandonment of feeling* incredible in one so young, a burst of passion which told of the volcano hid in that little heart which had beat for only six years. No attempts to console could silence the storm of her distress. "My papa is dead! my papa is dead!" She never thought that her mother, and brothers and sisters had lost papa, too. No, there could be "no sorrow like unto her sorrow." Poor little Hester! It was not so very strange after all, that she should so lament over him who was lost to her thus early—not so strange that she should steal away into the room where her dead papa was laid, and pushing a chair to the side of his body, climb up and pull down the white sheet which covered him. "Her papa might be asleep, and she was going to waken him," was her sobbing reply, when found and told she must go away. She had tried to waken him, too, for she had put her little fingers on the rigid eyelids and

tried to open them, and on the lips, but they would not part. "Oh, my papa is so cold, why don't you warm him, and then he will wake up."

"Your papa will never wake again," says the nurse, as she covers up the insensible clay, and lifts the child in her arms.

"He will wake I say, if you warm him. What is dead—won't he talk to Hester to-morrow ?

"No, child, no—they will take him away and put him in the ground, and you won't never see him again."

"Oh, I want to stay with my papa," screamed the child, fearfully, and kicking and sobbing, and struggling, she was borne out of the room, and the door locked against her further attempts. Was it so very strange ? It was her father's hand which had strewed flowers in the daily paths her fairy feet had trod, and sheltered her in his arms from the slightest breath of chiding. It had been his voice that, when her sterner mother sought to restrain within the bounds of fashionable etiquette and conventional forms, spoke liberty to her young spirit, and sent her forth, free as a bird on the wing. She had been truly one of his household gods, and had not the worshiper been removed, the object of his idolatry would have known no wish, no will ungratified. Thus idolized, thus unrestrained, the beautiful and passionate child would have entered upon the reali-

ties of life unfitted for its duties, unnerved for its storms. Ah, little Hester ! who shall say this early discipline of thy heavenly Father's hand was not a design of infinite love, to fit thy young mind, by a remembrance of the first sad trial, to brave life's coming storms, leaning upon an arm of grace ?

But now little Hester is no longer in that old house by the river-side, where she sat on her father's knee and looked out of the piazza upon Malmsbury Castle. She is there no longer to count those old melodious chimes as they ring out the hours of day and night. She no longer passes the room on tip-toe, where her dead papa had laid, or goes in to look wonderingly about, to see if he may not be there still. His memory has lingered with her all the long days of autumn and winter, and often, when returned from school, she has ran to her mother with the inquiry, "has papa got back from heaven yet?" How often in her daily instructions, has that mother spoken to her little ones of their "father gone to heaven," telling them to "be good and they would see him again." But little Hester cannot wait, and day after day she looks for her father's return.

Here, in this beautiful and healthful retreat, with plenty of room to ramble about and gather the spring flowers, or play with her brothers and sisters on the lawn, Hester will forget to call for papa so often.

At least, so her mother thinks, and is startled when she comes in with the inquiry, "mother, is papa coming to live with us soon?" It is too trying to endure, and every effort is made to prevent inducement to any more such strange queries.

Hester, withal, is not a sad child. Nay, she is mirthful, and even mischievous, but this first great storm has bent the little flower, and it will take time to prop it up, and heal the wound. Hester is like an April sky; one hour her face is radiant with smiles, the next, it is bathed in tears. One hour she is calm and gentle, and the next some pebble has been thrown upon the still lake of her passions, and it is ruffled and surging in fury. Poor Hester! can the journey of life be a smooth one, for a spirit like thine? Can thy heaven be always bright above thee?

But the sorrows of childhood, though deep, cannot overwhelm all of its fleeting hours, nor storm-clouds darken always the sunlight of its brief sky, and the little mourner after a while ceases to inquire for papa, or look for his coming, though often when laid on her little pillow at night will she see him in dreams, and when wakening talk of him to brother and sister.

And Hester must be sent from home to a fashionable boarding-school, and one of her sisters will accompany her.

It is quite time the laws of fashionable education

were obeyed, for Hester is past the grave age of seven. Fashion requires that she be sent away from the untiring care and vigilance of a mother, to be confided to the mercenary guidance of a cold-hearted, careless principal of a boarding-school of quality. It requires that at her tender years, she be deprived of the thousand comforts and the healthful freedom of her beautiful home, and immured in the pent-up walls of a crowded institution. Here she is provided with a scanty share of mean food, forbidden to run, jump, or play, except by rule, to walk only as in a funeral procession, and to be cramped in all the overflowings of a young and bounding spirit,—giving rise to every invention of mischief to escape such unnatural surveillance and find occupation for the mind's activity. And why all this? That she may be enabled at the requisite time, the fashionable age of seventeen, to appear as is becoming to a young lady of rank. She must know how to read, write, understand arithmetic, needlework, drawing, music, French, dancing, be able to carve at the table before her guests, and know how to regulate all the affairs of a household, all in the space of ten years. She must early learn to lay down her knife and fork in silence, to sit gracefully, eat according to rule, and walk like a master of broadsword exercises. All these great matters accomplished, and she is to be presented to society as a candidate for matrimony. How will Hester, the in-

dependent, blunt-spoken, mischievous, restless little spoiled pet of her lost papa bear all this?

She is but seven years of age when she bids farewell to the mother stern in her sense of duty, mistaken though she be. Ah! what a change,—and here her young spirit rebels, and now as night after night her cheek is laid closely to her sister's as the two nestle together in their stranger bed, she weeps for home, for mother, for papa that is dead. "I know papa would never have sent us here if he hadn't died," she sobs, and finally falls asleep to dream of grave old women with books in one hand and a ferule in the other, standing over her bed. But sister says in the morning, "mother said if we did not obey Mrs. Principal, we would be put to shame before everybody, and then locked up in dark closets. Oh, dear, Hester, we must be very good and mind every word."

Hester and her sister learn very well. Hester is apt and bright, and so the lessons are not so tedious and difficult as they would be to duller minds. She catches, too, almost by intuition, the fashionable airs she sees in those around, for intercourse with fashionable society renders children precocious. Being cramped for room to develop the more lovable traits of her disposition, after becoming well acquainted with her teachers and classmates, she feels prompted to devise some scheme of mischief, and show her independence of feeling, by some sort of a

don't-care action. This however cannot be accomplished, excepting in the few moments allotted to play, but little Hester is very soon constituted the queen spirit of all the fun-loving juveniles at the school, and some of their childish pranks require the discipline of the superiors.

It is but twice in the year that holidays are permitted to the inmates of the school, and only at these times can little Hester spring with unchecked steps, over the grounds of her mother's estate. The first visit home—it is indeed sun-light in the path of the little recluse, and how warmly she bounds to embrace her mother and the four little ones who have remained behind, enjoying privileges of which she has been deprived. How bright everything appears! How wild with joy she runs from room to room with the little troop who are nearly as glad as she; how she chats with the servants as they call her pet names, and tells them, “she wishes there was no such thing as school in all the world, for then she could always stay at home, and home is so pleasant.” And there she is out upon the lawn, jumping and running and chasing and flying, till the little heart, so long accustomed to beat in time with the rules of school, palpitates as if it would burst its hidden bounds.

Well, to-morrow is Hester's birth-day. She has been at home from school several holidays, for “she is now nine years of age, and she is so old, and grown
... ”

"Mamma, to-morrow is my birth-day—only think."

"I think, my love. I know it—but what then?"

"Why, mother, if you please let me have a little company?"

"How many do you want, and who are they?"

"Well, mother, Sarah and I went to see all those old women at the poor-house yesterday; I mean all *your* old women that you give so much to, and I want to have them all here to supper, every one, and they will be so glad, and it will be so funny to see them."

"Why, Hester, what put such a scheme into your head, to want to make fun of such poor old people? I fear you are very naughty."

"Oh, no, indeed, mamma, I don't want to make fun of them; but I want to see them pleased, and they will be so glad to eat supper in a nice place, that I thought it would be funny. Oh, no, mamma, I should be very wicked to make fun of them."

"Well, if I give you leave, what will you do? I can't be troubled with such a gathering."

"Oh, please let me do it all myself. Hatty and Jane can boil some mutton and turnips, and we can buy some beer, and have some tea too, and Henry and John can make a great long table with boards out in the orchard, and Sarah and I can set the table so nicely."

"But all these preparations require money, Hester, and I am not quite certain that I have any to spare."

" Oh, I have some that I saved a long time from what you gave me when I went to school, and I will take that. "

" Very well, I will gratify you this time, but if anything improper takes place, your company will be broken up, and you sent to bed. "

" Oh, I will be so careful, "—and down stairs skips Hester to tell Hetty and Jane all the grand scheme. Having gained their co-operation, she starts for Henry and John, and succeeds in eliciting their promises of assistance for the morrow.

" Come, Sarah, now let's go invite all the company, " and off the little ladies trudge nearly a mile to the parish poor-house. They go their round among the poor decrepit superannuated creatures, filling each with wonder and a strange delight, as she tells them, " It's *my* party, for to-morrow is my birth-day, and I'm nine years old, and mamma said I might do all myself. "

" Bless the little lady! Long life to her bright eyes! " are the frequent exclamations which follow her as she goes round.

They are sixty in all, these poor old women, and they have in prospect a feast which is to many of them a new era in existence. What a fixing up of old rags to bear some appearance of decency and comfort. What a washing, ironing, borrowing, and limping to and fro. How they are living over again

their once youthful hours, and how visions of their young days, long since forced from remembrance, come over them like the first glad breath of spring! How little is required to increase the happiness of old age, the second childhood of life!

And among the little folks too, with Hester at their head, what plotting and contriving, giving orders and counter-orders, laughing, singing, and running back and forth! "La! sakes, Miss Hester, one would think it was the queen's birth-day, you make such a to-do,"—say the servants, laughing at the self-important airs Miss Hester assumes. But Hester has it all her own way, after all.

It looks very nicely, that long table under the orchard trees, and the benches arranged around. It is about the hour which Hester has named for their convening, and one and another is constantly making way through the wide garden gate. Here they are, the motley group, some bowed low with age, or infirmities, the lame, the deaf and the blind; their cotton handkerchiefs are pinned over their shoulders, and their gray hairs are covered by caps of every shape and material. Their furrowed brows, their toothless jaws, bringing noses and chins into close proximity, their quivering heads and limbs—would they not furnish a scene for Hogarth? Ah, if only a Daguerrian were here—but his age is not yet; this is a view in the foreground of the past, but we can look at it here in the light of memory.

The nicely boiled mutton comes smoking on the table, as the huge lids are removed, and the dishes of turnips, and the fragrant tea. We can see the poor women now as they eat, for we are with Mrs. Warwick and a few friends she has invited, to be lookers on at Hester's birth-day feast. In a shady nook, quite unseen by the guests, we can see and hear for ourselves. Glasses of beer are added to the table, and Hester, wild with delight, flits from one guest to the other, saying something to each, which, by their smiles, seems to be very pleasing in their ears. The servants and the brothers and sisters are all waiters on those who are sitting at the table. The glasses of beer have circulated freely, and now they are replenished with *gin*, (remember these were not the days of temperance and Maine-laws,) and eagerly they are sipped. Hester is flitting around and slyly slipping a paper into the hands of each. "Bless her little heart, what is it? oh, snuff—how kind to think of it—oh, what good snuff, too," mumbled out the poor creatures, as each regales herself with a pinch. Hunger and age render them incapable of disposing of the eatables very rapidly, but now they have nearly finished their meal. They are warm with the stimulating beverages they have drank, and hark! we will draw nearer now—they are cracking their jokes of olden time. Now *they are telling stories for the gratification of "Miss*

Hester," who listens in great glee, and now their trembling voices rise high and shrill in songs of the workhouses and the "Beggar's Opera."

Supper is ended, and Hester leads the way to the barn. "What is she going to do?" says her mother, following. Oh, surely her little head has concocted a dancing scheme. The floor has been cleaned and nicely swept, and here in one corner, is a seat for old John, the blind fiddler, who is the only *gentleman* invited. And now he plies his fiddle in the quaint old airs of other days, and the dance begins. The scene defies description. Here is the fun for which Hester has longed, and for which she has plotted all this. We laugh till we cry, and we laugh again, and are almost ashamed of ourselves. But to see the contortions, the jostling against each other in the vain attempt to keep time, the glee with which they toss their arms and try to swing round, is irresistibly comical. At last the poor tired creatures drop on the floor to rest, and here they might continue their laughing and chatting until too late an hour. Mrs. Warwick enters, and giving to each a small sum of money, and saying some kind words, advises them now to go back to their home, and thus the strange company breaks up, declaring that "it is the happiest time they ever seed," and "thanking and blessing the sweet little lady, Miss Hester."

This was a scheme originated by a child but nine years of age, wondered at, and laughed at by her

mother and all her friends. "Where could she have got such an idea?" was more than once the inquiry, but might it not have been suggested by her reading of our Lord's injunction, "When thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Hester had read her Bible, and her young mind had interpreted it as has been seen. She had not seen such feasts at her mother's house, for they were of a far different character.

But this affair has made Hester a great favorite with the poor, and the praises, and the eulogiums passed on her whenever she meets the families around, are fast filling her little head with vanity. She has not a mother who can teach her humility—every lesson she learns inculcates directly or indirectly, pride and self-conceit. The foundation is being laid daily for building up self-righteousness, and looking for salvation as the reward of good deeds.

And now Hester returns again to school. These early traits of character will soon develop themselves in various forms, and bring forth fruits either of evil or good. What a charge is the guardianship of an immortal spirit. What consequences depend upon it, both in this life and the next, consequences not limited to the immediate actors in the scene, but to posterity.

CHAPTER V.

ERRORS AND INCONSISTENCIES.

HESTER WARWICK was a great favorite with the poor of Oxfordshire, especially after the affair of the birth-day fete. There was something quite different in the active, impulsive charities of the energetic young girl from those of the cold, systematically trained alms-givings of her mother and others who were the patrons of the destitute in that parish. It was quite a different affair for her to be seen at the doors of the humblest hovels in the coldest weather, with her basket and bundle as heavy as she could carry them, than for the stately ladies with their strict inquiries into the necessity of the case, to slowly dole out the pennies, and tell them to get this and that article themselves, and if they made good use of the money, they should have more. But then, Mrs. Warwick and those other ladies heard their names read out in public on certain Sabbaths, as having paid such and such liberal sums for the charities of the church, and it was a matter of emulation among them who should appear to the world as the

greatest giver, for pride would not permit them to rank among the least devoted. And so, if they could report having "visited and relieved" a certain number of poor families, at a certain time, their duties to God and man were fully discharged. The children of these ladies were also early initiated into the practice of giving, by having little sums given to them to throw into the charity boxes, or bestow upon the little ones of the poor. But *self-denial* for the purpose of charity, was a virtue unknown in their category, and of course it could not be inculcated upon their children. Therefore, neither were losers by any acts of benevolence they might perform.

"La! 'ere's Miss 'Ester; set down, darling, 'ere's a box in the corner. Jack, go get some stubble and make a *blast*, for Miss 'Ester, the poor little dear is neramost perished." This was the kind of salutation the little daughter of Mrs. Warwick often received in her visits to the hovels on the hill-side, or near the road. So well did these children of want love their young friend, that if not sure of another stick of wood that day, their last would be laid on the fire for her, while she, crouched down in the miserable corner, would distribute her bounties, and then read to them long chapters from her little pocket Bible. Over this singular child there seemed to rest an influence she knew not of, prompting her amidst all her volatility and mirthfulness, to think of something

beyond the present, of which she heard at church and in the prayers and the Bible. In reading to these ignorant families, she seemed gifted with the talent of a missionary, for when they gathered around in listening wonder, would interrupt her with inquiries into the meaning of what she read, she would explain and enlarge upon the subject in a manner altogether her own. "Ah, dear! a wonderful child is that Miss 'Ester. What'll she be some day—the Lord knows!" was the remark of many of her auditors after she had left their presence. And how proud was the heart of little Hester when being rolled away in the post-chaise which was bearing her from home, she would see "her poor families" standing in the doors of their huts and calling out their farewells, or following her long distances in the road with their blessings. All this was not good, it was fuel to her natural vanity; yet this was better than being a child whom no one loved, and no one regretted, spoiled, selfish and useless.

Ah, Hester! thou art treading a path of temptation, but it is hedged in, though thou canst not yet see the thorns, nor hear the distant rolling of the storm.

Hester at school, is a very different girl from Hester at home. At school she is a good student, but being a quick one, she has time to give vent to the activity of her disposition, in planning schemes of

amusement, and mischievous sport. Often these are of a character to create an excitement through the whole institution, and when others are blamed as being the authors, Hester boldly steps forth and acknowledges herself as the culprit. Such a course generally ends in severe reproofs by the teachers, and in a closer union of herself and schoolmates in the bonds of affection. But young girls are sufficiently apt in concocting plans for mischief, and a record of Hester's exploits in this line might be amusing enough, but not so improving.

Hester Warwick is fourteen years of age, and it is now time she is *confirmed*. A visit of the Bishop is announced to take place, and she must return home for the purpose of uniting with other children of the diocese in submitting to the sacred rite. (Were they *children* whom Paul confirmed?) Hester believes if she is not confirmed, she cannot be saved, and she submits to it as an act of necessity, and is heartily glad when it is over, "it is so tedious." And very similar, also, are her feelings when kneeling by the side of her mother, she partakes of the holy sacrament, or communion.* These solemn services might have influenced her mind in a very different way, but the manner in which the communicants partake, indicates that they regard them only as a mere matter of form. She rises from her knees,

* See "Order of Confirmation," Book of Common Prayer.

deeming the work now fully done. She is a Christian in her own view, and that of the world around, and has a right to eternal happiness.*

Hester Warwick is not now the blooming, healthy girl she was at the age of nine. Confinement at school, constant study within closed walls, and low diet, have deprived her of a natural and healthful appetite, afflicted her with a daily headache, and in the place of bloom and freshness, her cheeks are pale and hollow, and her eyes are sunken. She has grown so rapidly, too, and is so tall, that she is quite emaciated. The fears of her mother are at last aroused, and Hester is withdrawn from school. But it will take great care and attention, and much skill will be required to remedy the evils of years. And then ill health has bestowed upon the young girl a gravity of demeanor which is not natural, and causes her to be considered by strangers, as a young lady of eighteen. Consequently, visitors at her mother's house are disposed to pay her marked attentions, which are not at all acceptable to Mrs. Warwick.

The residence of the widow, being but a few miles from the city of Oxford, was the frequent resort of the deans, and other dignitaries of the church, with their wives also. Theology, we will not say *religion*, was discussed freely in the long sittings at table, in Hester's presence, and the supposed peculiar excel-

* See "Order of Confirmation," Book of Common Prayer.

lences of THE church, was the theme of frequent conversation. Greatly did it puzzle her young mind to see these very dignitaries entering with a zest, keenly as others, into all the gaities of the ball-room, and the mysteries of the card-table. The striking contrast between the conversation and religious observances of these members of "the Holy Church," and their manner of living, struck her mind as something inconsistent and anomalous—she tried in vain to reconcile the incongruities. After much reflection she arrived at the conclusion, that either the officers of the church were wrong in their lives, or that its doctrines and forms could not mean all that was written and preached.

The god-mother of Hester, who was a cousin of Mrs. Warwick, resided in London, and learning that her god-daughter was in delicate health, wrote a very earnest invitation to Hester, to make her a prolonged visit. The request was not at first granted, as Mrs. Warwick did not wish her daughter to enter the circles of fashion until the proper time for her "coming out." Hester, while at the boarding-school, had become a proficient in dancing, but her mother wished to initiate her into the science of card-playing before she was introduced into the society of which she would soon be a member. So Mrs. Warwick daily instructed her young daughter in the various games fashionable at the time, and the learner made

rapid proficiency. She soon became able to handle the cards with dexterity, and to practice all the secrets of the games.

The invitation from her god-mother being urgently repeated, Hester was at last permitted to visit London. The solemn relation in which this lady stood to the young girl as sponsor for her christian education, and having endorsed in person her public "renunciation of the devil and all his works," &c.,* would seem to have indicated a superior watch care over her spiritual interests. And such, in her simplicity, Hester expected. But the first salutation of her god-mother, as she opened her arms to receive and embrace her, entirely dispelled such an illusion.

"Why, bless me, child, how you look! You've been moped to death in the country. All you want is *amusement*."

"Oh, I have had amusements plenty," replied Hester, "but I did not care for them. I felt no inclination to enjoy them."

"Oh, fie, child, you will soon have the inclination, if you stay with me. I shall have no moping about me."

The aftercourse of the god-mother proved a determination to verify her words. The delicate, wan girl was made to participate in scenes of gaiety which continued their exciting rounds, by day and

*See Book of Common Prayer.

by night, and all *to regain her health !* She who should have taken Hester by the hand and led her to the feet of the Saviour, opened to her the allurements of the world in all their force. The card-table, the dance, and the theatre, were the nightly scenes to which she was introduced, and yet, an unvarying attendance on the morning services of the church was exacted, while sumptuous dinners, and fashionable companies occupied the afternoons. Such is a faint outline of Hester's first winter in London.

Yet, amid all these scenes, Hester's young heart is sick. Constant excitement, heated rooms, and late hours, cannot restore to a debilitated frame, vigor and elasticity, and she wearies of these new and unnatural prescriptions ! An aching void pervades her mind, while each night, as she retires to rest, something whispers, "all is vanity !"—"all is wrong !" She understands but one way of duty, and so conscientious is she in treading that path, that no weariness nor lateness of the hours prevents her observance of the lessons inculcated by her mother. What lessons are they ? To "read a portion of scripture, be it ever so small, and *recite* a prayer before closing your eyes." All vague and dark to Hester's understanding are the truths of our holy religion ; yet in the small, still hours of night, the precepts she reads startle her with their striking contrast to the practices of herself and all around her. *He*, who convinceth the

world of sin, is He not speaking to Hester, as alone she lies upon her bed, in the heart of that great city? Are not these nightly thoughts, oft warning visitants, knocking at the portals of her young heart?

At the close of the season, her god-mother, seeing that her prescriptions had failed to restore health to Hester, and that she was even becoming more frail, took her on a trip to the Isle of Wight. Here the life of pleasure was continued, though of a far more healthful and natural character; but Hester, charmed to enthusiasm with the wild beauty of those picturesque regions, turned with disgust from the artificial pursuits of fashion, to spend hours in wandering amid the delights of nature, listening to unwritten music, and feasting her eyes upon beauties God alone can bestow. The pure, bracing air, the comparative quietude she enjoyed, the natural hours of rest permitted to her, and almost constant exercise in the open air, gave her a healthy appetite, and corresponding vigor of frame, and strength of nerve. In a few months Hester's god-mother returned her to Mrs. Warwick, with a proud boast of her skill in matters of health.

CHAPTER VI.

INCIDENTS.—HESTER'S MARRIAGE.

DURING Hester's absence from home, the neighborhood in which Mrs. Warwick resided had received an addition to its society. The family of Lord C——, whom Mrs. Warwick and her daughters had frequently met in the London circles of fashion, having there taken up their residence. Of course cards were exchanged, and in time quite an intimacy formed ; but a few months elicited a knowledge of Lady C——'s circumstances, which called forth all the sympathy which ladies of fashion can be supposed to possess. Lady C—— was remarkably beautiful, and her husband became, from some cause, an unjust and jealous tyrant, exercising the closest *surveillance* over every moment and action of her life. The most common pleasures were denied her, except accompanied with the most unpleasant restrictions. Three lovely children called her mother, yet, solely to render his wife still more wretched, Lord C—— placed them at a school near by, forbidding the preceptress

to permit their heart-broken mother to see them. At last, he forbade his wife to leave the house under any circumstances ; but fearing the ill-will of his neighbors, he dared not deny her the company of those who chose to visit her. At last, the loss of her children, anxiety, and close confinement, did the work the husband in his cruelty intended should be done. Lady C—— grew paler, and more fragile, every day, and finally became unable to rise from her couch. Friends came around her, seeking with their vain talk and amusements to cheer ; the clergyman came with his prayer-book, and read by her side the “visitation of the sick ;” but there was no power in either to soothe the heart-broken woman. Hester’s bright face, and lively ways, always seemed welcome to Lady C——, and with the consent of Mrs. Warwick, she was a frequent visitor in the room of the invalid.

“Read to me, dearest,” said Lady C——, one day, in reply to Hester’s inquiry, “what shall I do for you to-day ? And what shall I read ? There are no books here that I see, excepting the prayer-book.”

“I suppose Lord C—— has locked the library, and I am tired of the prayer-book.”

“Well, here is my little bible in my pocket, suppose I read a little in this.”

Very indifferently Lady C—— assented to the proposal, and Hester, with an intuitive perception of that which would most readily attract her attention,

selected some of those beautiful passages in the psalms, and the gospels, so well adapted to soothe a wounded spirit. Hester closed the book, but to her surprise Lady C—— laid her wan hand on hers, saying, "Read on, my dear, I did not know such beautiful words were there." Hester continued to read for a long time, and then Lady C—— remarked, "You are wearied now, dearest, but will you not come to-morrow, and read to me again? Your bible seems to me like a new book."

And so day after day did Hester visit the sick and troubled woman, and read to her the words of life, not knowing how truly she had become an angel of mercy. Mrs. Warwick, and the ladies of the neighborhood wondered, "how a young girl like Hester could immure herself daily, for hours, to amuse a sick woman;" but as Lady C—— declared she never felt so comfortable as when Hester was with her, her mother could not object. When others spoke of Hester's remarkable devotion to the invalid, and wondered she could take any interest in reading the bible so much, Mrs. Warwick usually replied, "Oh, Hester was always a strange child. I don't know where she learned such ways;" but the mother did not know, or did not remember, the words which God spake,— "I will lead the blind by a way they know not."

Feeling indignant at Lord C——, for his cruel

treatment of his wife, her native independence of character showed itself in disregarding the frowns with which he met her, when on her errands of kindness, and in disobeying the restrictions he would have placed upon her intercourse with Lady C——. She voluntarily took advantage of his absence on several occasions to beguile the children into the presence of their mother, leaving her to enjoy, unrestrained, the privilege of embracing and folding them to her heart, while she herself kept watch, lest the unnatural husband and father should suddenly return. Such acts of kindness, which no other of her numerous friends dared to perform, greatly endeared Hester to the heart of the afflicted woman, and the blessed effects of these ministrations of mercy, though performed by an unconscious instrument, eternity only can disclose. Strange did it seem for that young girl, thus to turn aside from the fascinations of pleasure, and the scenes of mirth she loved so well, to read the bible to a lonely invalid ; but the Lord sends by whom He will send, and He had *designs* in thus choosing her as the instrument to shed light on a departing soul. Lady C—— died with her hand in that of the young Hester, and her last glance directed to the little bible which lay upon her bed.

Ah, Hester! little dost thou know, now, while in this darkened room, with thy mother, and her companions around thee, how the memory of this hour

will in future years bring joy to thy spirit and thanksgiving to thy lips.

But winter came, and with the return of the gay season, Hester was again in London. How thickly there were the nets of the tempter, spread beneath her unsuspecting feet, and how soon was she completely involved ; beauty and grace, wit and intellect, rank and wealth, all were hers—what wonder then, she became the cynosure of all eyes, the admired above all others. Flatterers termed her “Mary Queen of Scots,” from her remarkable resemblance to the portrait of that lovely but unfortunate woman. From this giddy height of fashion and folly, Hester Warwick looked down upon the worshipers at her shrine, with no emotion save that of scorn, and retired to her room each night, imagining the world contained no other Hester ; she, the worshiped of earth, the blest of heaven ! With what a calm, pharisaic pride did she enter daily the abodes of the poor, to dispense her alms ; or kneel by her bed to utter the devotions of the church. And yet, she was sinking deeper and deeper into the pit of sin, pushed downward by the very hand which should have led her in the strait and narrow path leading unto life. She saw no danger ; the world around her were going the broad road, and if the words of the holy book suggested

to her, there might be a better way, it was not yet opened to her view.

All who are familiar with the records of high life in London, know that *gambling* prevails in nearly all the circles of fashion, and to an enormous extent among fashionable *ladies* ! Says an author of unquestionable veracity, in his "GLOBY AND SHAME OF ENGLAND :"—" There are cliques of women who assemble night after night, for no other purpose but *play*, and the *wine* flashes on the card-table. They gamble on till their money is gone ; they pledge their jewels, family plate, horses and carriages, to the pawn-brokers, and often the first intimation their husbands have of it, is from some long-bearded Jew, who presents his claim with the very comforting intelligence, that the day of grace is over, and that he has now an opportunity of redeeming the property. The Jew had received from fifty to five hundred per cent. for his money."

Such was the society into which Hester was constantly led ; these the scenes she witnessed from week to week. She saw her god-mother, and all the ladies of her rank, indulging in these practices during the week, and on the Sabbath joining in the solemn devotions of the church, partaking of the holy communion, observing the fasts, and other weekly *services*, and then returning to their nights of dissipation. They were her superiors in age and wisdom,

the leaders of others, young, like herself ; if *they* did these things, who could reprove *her*? and so conscience was silenced, and the naturally depraved inclinations of the heart, became the leader of the actions. Night after night found Hester at the card-table, permitted at first to play for amusement, but gradually the temptation gained upon her to play at stakes, higher and yet higher every evening. At last there came a night in which Hester, young, inexperienced, excited and infatuated, and angry at repeated losses, staked all the valuable jewelry she wore, amounting to a very large sum, and all was lost! Humiliated, angry and disgusted, she left the tables, declaring she would *never stake* again. The company laughed, and some remarked, " Oh, she is young, she will soon come round again ;" but they did not know the spirit of Hester. Although she often after played for amusement, yet her vow was sacredly kept. The jewels were afterwards redeemed by her mother, and Hester profited by her dearly bought experience.

It is the close of a London winter. Hester Warwick, the belle of the circles, round which she has flitted away the seventeenth year of her young life, has seen titles and wealth uncounted laid at her feet. Her hand has been sought in marriage, by

those whom her god-mother and friends consider fit aspirants for so valuable a gift ; but Hester is proud and vain, and she is a coquette, and so she turns away and spurns those upon whom just now she has smiled. But one comes now, with all the arts a man of fashion knows so well ; he stands at a distance as if hardly daring to approach the queen of the season. Winningly comes Herbert Marchmont, and steals the prize, which others could not purchase. He has rank, wealth, talents, and the manners of a courtier, and he knows the way to the heart of woman. He makes himself a magnet, and Hester's affections yield. And god-mother and mother are satisfied, and Hester is pleased, and surrenders the happiness of her life into the keeping of one, whom others have in vain tried to secure as their partner in the drama of married life.

Months pass. The golden hours of summer and autumn are occupied with preparations for a great event. A *great* event, one which will influence a long life, and its consequences be felt in eternity. One kind of preparation is made, indeed, but another, and the most important, is entirely wanting. But the history of one fashionable bride, is, with a few variations, the history of all, especially in high life in England. There are the months of bustle and expenditure in getting up all the useless accustomed paraphernalia—the wedding, splendid, of course ; the

subsequent sumptuous entertainments, excursions of pleasure, and rounds of travel. When Hester Warwick and Herbert Marchmont knelt at the altar, and were pronounced "man and wife," the world said of them, "twin spirits are they ; how admirably suited to each other ! She so beautiful, graceful, and young ; he so elegant, so noble, so manly." But even this same sagacious world has not always the penetration requisite to discern character, nor to read the secrets of the heart, nor to unveil the future, and so, alas ! it is often sadly mistaken in its estimates of appropriateness. And so in less than a year from the time that Hester first met Herbert Marchmont, she bears his name. Daily and nightly she treads with him the floors of assembly-rooms, lounges at the card-table, and sips the wine, or listens to the fascinating rehearsals and performance of the theatre. But God has CHOSEN Hester, as "a brand plucked from the burning,"—and her husband "shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE.

HESTER Marchmont entered upon her married life surrounded by all the concomitants of luxury and splendor. A house, not a *home*, for is any *fashionable* residence truly a home? was taken in one of the aristocratic portions of London, furnished with elegance, and provided with domestics, by the still worldly-wise and careful Mrs. Warwick, who wished no other establishment to excel that of her daughter. With servants fully competent to relieve her of every care, and a husband and friends devoted to her wishes, the young wife seemed borne above the realities of every day existence, and to float lightly on a stream of arcadian bliss. The silent-winged messengers, who once came to her pillow in the hours of slumber, were heard no more, and their whispers were forgotten. Hand in hand with her husband, she thoughtlessly lived as if there were no God—no heaven—no hell.

Seven years, with an interruption of illness each of those years, did Hester live with her husband,

the mother of an infant, exceedingly frail, declared she " must remain at home to nurse her babe, until it grew stronger."

" Pshaw ! can't you get a nurse for it, as other women do, and not make an old mope of yourself, not fit to look at ? "

" I could not trust so frail a child to a hired nurse, and I am determined, now that I am a mother, to do a mother's duty so long as our babe shall live."

" Very well, madam, if you refuse to go out with me, you may sit up all night to nurse your child, for what I care ; only don't you dare to go to bed while I am out. I'm not going to be let in to the house by a lazy servant, while I have so independent a wife."

Knowing the violent abuse to which she would be subjected if she dared to disobey in this matter, Hester at once prepared herself to comply with the heartless and unreasonable requisitions of her husband, yielding her own comfort a sacrifice to the holy principle of a mother's love. Whole nights were now frequently spent in her chair, watching for her faithless and cruel husband, and if wearied and exhausted, she did not fly instantly at his summons, she met with the vilest abuse.

Ah, what shall console Hester now ? she, the once light-hearted and cheerful consoler of others. Alone by her sleeping babe, in the silent watches of the night, and her servants slumbering around her, she reeps hot, bitter tears.

Earth seems dreary everywhere, friends faithless, love a mocking shadow, and heaven dark above her. But memory brings in this hour of desolation a picture of the past, and recalls the scenes of another room than this. It is a vision of a pale woman, whose large sad eyes rest on the bright face of a young girl who is reading from the holiest of books. And then the scene changes a little, and the room is full of sad and weeping friends,—a dying woman sits propped in her bed, her cold hand laid in that of the blooming girl, while her eyes in their fading light rest lovingly upon a little well-worn Bible, which lies upon the bed, and her face, once so very sad, is serene and happy. Ah, Hester, that book which became the comforter of one desolate like thyself, can show thee also the way of life. Her regular devotions have long since been performed, but this night she will beguile these hours of unbearable wretchedness, by reading her long-neglected Bible. Its calm pure words soothe, for a moment, the storm of passion in her heart, gradually she becomes interested, and forgets the great grief which is gnawing at her life. The husband comes at last, the small hours of the night are passed ; the watcher flies to the door, but she looks not so sad, so weary as is usual.

“What’s the matter, Wide-awake, you’re brisk to-night ; I guess sitting up agrees with you,” is the greeting Hester receives from her husband.

"I am weary enough, and this watching is killing me, but I have been reading the Bible, and that kept me awake."

"Some Methodist book, I suppose, you've got hold of," is the reply, giving her a *kick*, and the vile husband staggers up stairs to his bed.

The reading thus commenced is resumed the next night, on which the lonely wife repeats her task of watching. She dares not open the book when her husband is present, for he has threatened to destroy it, and now it is very precious to her. Her days are still occupied by the numerous calls of that society she has not wholly left. Calls of ceremony, receiving visitors, and giving and attending dinners, still form the daily events of Hester's existence. Surely this discipline of the night watching, severe as it is, is the only mode by which these day-dreams of worldliness can be dispelled. And so the once gay, card-playing, haughty belle, the proud wife and mother, has in her secret hours become a diligent searcher of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW VIEWS AND THEIR RESULTS.

HESTER MARCHMONT continued her reading with increasing interest, while yet the language of the New Testament seemed invested with deeper mystery the longer she read. Darker to her seemed those descriptions of our Saviour's baptism, and the corresponding scenes in the various Gospels. These she had often read, yet as a school-boy reads his lesson, thinking nothing of its meaning, and forgetting it as soon as read. But now they seemed to her hidden realities, with which she was in some way concerned, but how she could not understand. At last she turned with feverish impatience to all these narratives of baptism, from Matthew onward, until she came to the story of Philip and the eunuche ; and then alone in the solemn silence of her chamber, with clasped hands, she uttered the startling cry, "the Lord have mercy on me ! I believe on Jesus but have never been baptized !" The real import of that word "*baptize*," what was it ? How could she find its meaning ? The morning was drawing nigh, and March-

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mont would not now come home at all, his debaucheries would keep him until the morning meal; and so, wearied and worn, she laid by her book, and prepared to rest. But according to her views of duty, she must read one verse on her knees, ere she threw herself upon her bed. The verse which met her eyes, came with sudden force upon her already interested mind. "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God *before you*." "Oh," thought Hester, "if I, who have lived such a life of charity, devotion to the church, and obedience to my mother and husband, must be cast out of heaven—what will it be *for*?" Perplexed and distressed, she laid herself down, and exhausted, fell into a slumber, from which, mercifully, her wretched husband did not then return to arouse her.

At a late hour Hester has arisen, and the words which came to her spirit so forcibly, are again sounding in her ears. But she has time only for her regular devotions, and the babe claims her attention. By noon the father has returned stupified with his night revels, and is soon snoring in drunken sleep. The little babe has been cared for, all its wants have received attention, and it lies sleeping as sweetly as if it was not breathing an atmosphere of sin and sorrow, and there were no thorny paths in the prospective of its existence. Hester's morning toilet over, she would gladly return to the reading of that book,

in which she is so interested, but fashion claims her hours, and she must yield. But the veil is being drawn aside by an unseen hand, and the *Spirit* has begun his work, which he will never relinquish. The senseless routine of ceremonies which etiquette demands are beginning to weary the mind which has caught a glimpse of higher things, and she even longs for the night of silence and watching to return.

Night comes. Perhaps Marchmont will not go out to-night, and how will Hester find the meaning of that word *baptize*, as the *scriptures* define it? She is at no loss for its meaning as rendered in the book of common prayer; but are there not two ways of baptism? Or is the baptism of the Bible one thing, and that of the church of England another. In vain these inquiries are suggested to her mind, for she knows not where to look for a reply, excepting in the book which is to her mind, at present, a sealed volume. Why should she be so uneasy about the meaning of a mere word? She will dismiss the subject from her thoughts, and rely for salvation upon the church of her fathers, and surely all will be right.

But it is in vain to contend with an uneasiness that unfits her for enjoyment. Ere she is aware, the same influences are hovering around her spirit, and the words of the Master are sounding in her ears: "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." "He that believeth, and is *baptized*, shall be saved."

Too excited to sleep, for the first time with pleasure she finds that her husband is preparing for a night with his club. Having made his toilet and feeling in an unusual good humor, Marchmont jokes his wife, and turning to his babe impresses a kiss on its brow, and tossing it in his arms, remarks to Hester, " Well, baby *does* grow finely with your wise nursing, Wide-awake ; guess staying at home o' nights agrees with you both." And with a careless laugh the father leaves the house, while the mother calls nurse to disrobe the baby.

And now all is still ; the late hours of a London evening are merging into the noon of night, and Hester seats herself by the side of her sleeping child to search the Word of Life. Determined to ascertain all that the Bible contains on the subject of baptism, she begins at Genesis to look for the word, turns over the leaves and runs her finger down each page. But coming to the prophets, her attention is arrested by such passages as these : " The heart is deceitful above all things," &c. " Behold I am vile." The longer she reads, the faster her self-righteousness takes to itself wings, and a conviction of sinfulness takes possession of her mind, until the search after baptism becomes merged in the search for salvation. The days of her childhood loom up before her with their joys and their little sorrows, and in memory she is again in the hovels of the poor, and by the

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side of the invalid, reading to them words she knew only as a tale that is told. Then came trooping by, with aspects dark and frowning, the ghosts of wasted hours—nights spent in sin, days in folly, and squandered gifts of intellect and wealth. Hester Marchmont, the Pharisee, the woman of fashion, bows her head and weeps, oppressed with a load of guilt, and appalled at the remembrance of a judgment to come. She prays, but knows not how, she knows not the way to the mercy seat. To her prayer-book she again resorts, but these written prayers, so familiar to her eye and ear, do not express the meaning of her soul. They are solemnly beautiful, and she feels the force of these aspirations :—" O God, make clean our hearts within us." * " O God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us miserable sinners." † But these are not enough for the long, sad tale of misery she would pour into the ear of the sinner's Friend, if she only could. But the husband comes—the hours of night-watching are past—her task is done, and she retires to rest, but not to slumber.

The history of this night is the history of weeks succeeding. Her state of mind is known only to her God and herself, and Hester Marchmont bears *this* burden, also, *alone*. But ONE, mighty to save, has borne greater sorrows than these, and laid down His life that such as she might live. The law given on

* " Evening Prayer."

† *Litany.*"

Sinai is engraved on Hester's memory firmly as the alphabet of her mother-tongue, for she has often, in the days of her childhood, studied it at her mother's bidding as one of her daily tasks. But now she reads its sublime commentary, the Sermon on the Mount, and finds them both obligatory upon the lives and hearts also of all human kind. Thoughtfully she looks upon the past and the present of her life, and finds herself condemned. In thought, or in deed, she has broken each one of the commandments. Where now is her refuge? Who shall save her from the anger of a just and holy God? Her eye lights upon the words: "Come unto ME, all ye weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The thought, "would God invite a sinner to go to Him if He did not *mean* to save," darts into her mind, and almost audibly the prayer breaks from her bursting heart, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean;" and suddenly to her mind follows the reply: "I will, be thou clean." This seems strangely like language addressed to her, and she begins to hope that somehow she will be saved. But she reads the epistle to the Hebrews, and becomes alarmed, lest she should take comfort not intended for her—that an evil one has appeared to her as an angel of light.

It was during this time of walking through deep waters, that Hester accepted an invitation from a friend, to accompany her to a church of Scotch Pres-

byterians. Frequently she had attended the worship of dissenters, merely as a change of the 'usual Sabbath routine, but knew nothing of their sentiments, and scarcely the denomination. The term *dissenter* was enough, and was, in her view, and that of her family, synonymous with *heretic*. On this Sabbath the clergyman announced as his text, "Come, see a man who told me all things whatsoever I did ; is not this the Christ?" So perfectly adapted to the exercises of Hester's mind, was this Gospel sermon, that she began to wonder if the preacher did not know something of her life, and her late troubles of soul. But as he went on to describe the usual operations of the Holy Spirit in the work of conversion, suddenly came the idea into her mind, "What if all *I* have experienced should be the work of the Spirit." How intently she listened while the minister continued to speak of the goodness of God, in leading men to repentance, and in providing for penitent believers a way of salvation by Christ. "Surely," thought Hester, "if God has condescended to teach me my sinfulness, He intends to save me." Like Christian before the Cross, the burden seemed to fall from her heart, as this new view of God and His great plan of salvation burst upon her mental sight. She went home, flew to her Bible, and read over the chapter she had heard explained. "Lord, I believe," burst from her lips, and from that moment Hester Marchmont believed in Jesus with all her heart.

Strange was this change to herself, stranger still to her husband, but most strange indeed to those from whose companionship she now withdrew. Ridicule was their weapon to win her back to the old ways—commands and abuse, those of her husband. But Hester had begun a new life alone, and in her ignorance of Christian fellowship, she found herself apparently doomed to continue it alone, until death should terminate both sorrows and joys. God had been her teacher, the Bible her school, and she thought, "I know in whom I have believed, and He will keep that which I have committed to Him."

CHAPTER IX.

SEEKING THE TRUTH.

the peace which now filled her mind, reading
ible, prayer and meditation, and the increasing
as of her little one, Mrs. Marchmont found her
lations for the trials which would otherwise have
red her house an abode of wretchedness.
e pleasures could not be taken from her, and
too, came the Sabbath, once a day of tedious
and observances, now a day of delightful
edness. She saw a new beauty in many of the
ises of the church, and her heart joined in the
rs which were once to her a dead language.
omething was wanting—she felt as Mary at the
chre. “They have taken away *my Lord*, and I
not where they have laid him.”

stead of frequenting the afternoon services of
stablished church, her inclinations often led her
dissenting chapels, finding their worship more
eement with her newly awakened perceptions of
ivine life. Her husband and friends found her
mined on “strange paths,” as they termed them,

but she with her natural decision of character, stated her objections to the church in which she was born, and her reasons for preferring the others.

From the moment she had obtained peace in believing, the thought which had once struck her with so much force, returned to her mind with weight she could not shake off. Again and again she uttered in her hours of meditation—"I believe on Jesus, but have never been *baptized*." But what this baptism could be, that seemed so connected with believing, was an enigma she could not solve. But while daily praying the Lord to lead her into *all* truth, she resolved to search diligently until she found it, and to leave no stone unturned, which might reveal to her the treasure she so anxiously desired. She even tried to ascertain from her husband in his best moods, if other churches had the same modes of baptism as the Church of England. His answers shed no light on the subject, and if she now and then met with an acquaintance, with whom she dare converse on the subject, no one could give her any information. That there were such a people as Baptists, was wholly unknown to her, and no one of her friends ever mentioned their existence.

A Sabbath morning came in which Mr. Marchmont happened to be in an unusually gracious mood. Hester sat reading her Bible, when he called her by a name, which had of late become a familiar appellation—

"Come, Wide-awake, I'll take you to hear old dad Upton, the dipper."

"Upton, the dipper, who is he?"

"Why, he's an old chap that dips people into the water, all over, head and ears—what you've been thinking about so much lately."

Quite pleased at the thought that by means of this singular proposal, she might learn something of the subject which so frequently occupied her thoughts, Hester Marchmont gladly consented to accompany her husband. Unfortunately they did not arrive at the church until sometime after the services had commenced. "The dipper" himself did not officiate, but a younger man occupied his pulpit. He was discoursing with earnest solemnity and tenderness upon the value of the soul, and the infinite cost of its redemption. The sentiments affected Mrs. Marchmont deeply, and in returning home but few words passed between herself and husband, so absorbed was she in her own reflections. Mr. Marchmont disturbed them by inquiring,—

"What are you thinking about, Wide-awake?"

"I am thinking what a hard thing it is to be a Christian."

"Hard thing to be a Christian! Why, you *are* a Christian, good enough; you give every thing you have to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; you read your Bible and say your prayers—what more do you want?"

"Ah, there is more to be given up than the goods we possess!"

He said no more, but the thought dwelt upon her mind—

"If I give up my church, and give up the world, who knows what I may endure from my husband?"

The ensuing week Mrs. Marchmont was called upon to give more decided proofs that she was indeed resolved to give up the world.

Her first trial of faith was at hand. Her sister, who had recently become aware of the state of Hester's mind, resolved upon "weaning her from her foolish notions," and gave invitations for a grand fete, "complimentary to Mrs. Marchmont," a formal and particular one being sent to Mr. Marchmont and his wife among the very first. Mrs. Marchmont saw the net which was spread for her, and turning to her husband, remarked—

"Mary need not have done this, for I shall not go."

"Not go! Is it possible you are such a fool?"

"Yes, quite possible, for I cannot enjoy myself at such entertainments, and more than that, I consider them wrong."

"Oh, fudge! You'd better turn Methodist preacher at once. But, come now, be a good girl, and leave off this nonsense, and say you'll go; you know you are always the star of the evening, my pretty Wide-awake."

"Indeed, I cannot be tempted to go, so leave me to my own choice."

"Well, I know what'll tempt you to go. Come, say yes, plainly, and I'll go and take a seat for you in old Upton's church, this very week, so you can go whenever you've a mind to, and you can hear all about *dipping there*."

This was indeed a "temptation," and caused a throb of delight in Hester's heart, but still she feared her own strength. She therefore replied—

"I will decide to-morrow."

Her husband was obliged to be satisfied with this, for he knew well she could not be persuaded to do any thing against her will.

Mrs. Marchmont, in her rounds of benevolence, had frequently met with Mrs. Browning, the lady by whose invitation she had attended the church of the Scotch Presbyterians. Hester had become aware that she was a Christian woman, and an intimacy had grown up between them since that memorable day, which was truly an advantage to one situated as herself. Mrs. Browning had entered into Hester's newly awakened emotions with true Christian sympathy, but in regard to her anxiety concerning the meaning of *baptism*, she declared herself unable to afford her any assistance. She knew they called the Rev. Mr. Upton "the dipper," but supposed it was some new fanaticism which had sprung up, and

therefore never troubled herself to inquire into it. But her "conversation was in heaven," and her "walk such as became the Gospel of Christ." To her Mrs. Marchmont went with her new trouble, the entertainment she was so unwilling to attend, and the proposal made by her husband. Mrs. Browning's advice was to yield obedience *this once* to her husband's wishes, but to bear in mind it was a trial of her faith, and while in company to "watch and pray," that she might not displease her Lord and Master, and that the world of fashion might know by her conduct she was no longer one of them. She assured Mrs. Marchmont that if she stood firm in her behavior as a Christian, they would soon weary in their efforts to obtain her company on such occasions.

Hester, on the morrow, informed her husband that if he would pledge himself *certainly* to redeem his promise of a seat in the Rev. Mr. Upton's church, she would go with him *that once*.

"Like a sensible girl, as you would be if you would let these foolish notions alone, and we'll make a lad of you yet," was his reply.

Mrs. Marchmont's delight was great in the prospect of hearing "the dipper," and perhaps finding an opportunity to converse with him on the subject so important to her repose of mind.

The evening of the fete has at last arrived, and as Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont are about to leave home,

the alarm of "Fire! fire!" bursts upon their ears. It is very near their dwelling, and the flames are pouring from the windows of the house; the street is filled with the din of the fire engines, and the noise of an alarmed crowd. Their carriage waits at the door, but the coachman can hardly hold the frightened horses.

"Oh, Marchmont, what if it would reach our house, and our babe should be burned to death! Let *me* stay at home, if you will go."

"Now don't act the fool again; you know nurse will take care of Lizzie, and if the house does burn, it's insured. Get into the carriage now, quick. I'll have no more fooling."

It is five miles through the great city to Regent's Square, the residence of Hester's sister, and what anxious thoughts she is casting backward to her precious child, surrounded by the smoke and confusion, and deserted by her parents. But fear not, Hester, thy Maker reads thy heart, and *the time is not yet*—thy babe shall not be harmed.

Nearly half the distance is gained, for the fleet animals have sped rapidly on—but dark clouds have obscured the light of the stars, and the still atmosphere and the low muttering of distant thunder have heralded a storm. And now it comes; the elements are let loose, and the winds are careering madly around, while thunder, lightning, and pouring rain

contend for the mastery, and the bewildered coachman can hardly guide his steeds. Hester again pleads—

“ Marchmont, do turn back ; do you not see the very elements forbid our going ? ”

The husband swears a terrible oath, and in a voice hoarse with passion bids her “ Be quiet, for go I will, if it storms like hell ! ”

And so the poor wife leans back in her seat, and closing her eyes, endeavors to commit herself and her darling Lizzie to the care and protection of a merciful Father in heaven.

God cares for his children, and Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont reach in safety the illuminated residence of Mr. Stoneman. They are early, and Mary is delighted that Hester has arrived, and friendly greetings are exchanged, while Mr. Marchmont declares she may thank him, for he “ got Hester there in spite of fire and water, and thunder and lightning. ”

“ How are the children, Mary ? ” is Hester’s inquiry.

“ Oh, yes ! since you have become so sanctimonious, all your talk is of *the children*, ” replied the mother, with a sneer, “ but, however, they are all well but Ellie and Freddy, they are very sick. ”

“ How long have they been ill ? ”

“ Oh, these three weeks. ”

"Why, Mary! how could you have such a company and your children sick?"

"I sent out my cards two weeks ago, and do you think I would disappoint my company because the children were sick? Why, you're as bad as Stoneman, he's been bothering me to send excuses."

"Mary, I must go and see the children before I enter the drawing-room."

"No, Hester, you needn't go up stairs, I don't want to make a nursery-maid of you," replies the heartless Mrs. Stoneman.

"But I *will* go up and look at the children before I enter the room," and so Mrs. Marchmont very decidedly ascends the stairs. A sad place truly does she find. Little Ellie, not quite two years of age, lies upon two pillows placed upon a slab-table, with a bladder of cold water under her head, and a fly-blister on her breast. The blisters have been so repeatedly applied that the little ribs are exposed to the view. The tiny feet are encased in sheep's melts, and a nurse sits by her side, but the little sufferer, mercifully, is unconscious. Mrs. Marchmont is shocked; she has never received a hint of their illness until this evening. On a cot in another corner of the room lies the little boy, his cheeks red with the fever which burns within him. At Mrs. Marchmont's tender inquiry—

"How is little Freddy?" while she takes the poor hot hand in her's, the child murmurs out—

"Oh, aunty 'Ester, me so hungry. Fooly ma won't let me eat—why don't she let me eat?"

"Freddy is sick now—when he gets well he shall eat."

Mrs. Marchmont takes a white cloth, and pinning it over her elegant dress, lifts the poor little child tenderly, and walks with him soothingly about the room, while she despatches the nurse with directions to prepare the suffering boy some cooling nourishment. It is not long before the mother herself appears. Raising her hands and eyes, she exclaims—

"Well, really, I have a new nursery-maid—but I assure you, two are sufficient, so you may put Freddy down, and just go with me to the parlors. The company expect you—this is pretty doings!"

"But, Mary, I must and will stay with the children, and all night too. I could not go down a moment and they in such misery."

"Why, they have the best of nurses, and our physician is very attentive, and everything is done for them much better than you or I can do it."

"Very well, go down; I shall certainly remain here."

So the hostess is obliged to descend alone to her guests, and in great anger she ridicules "Hester's

queer ways—just because the children happen to be a little unwell.”

But the dear little boy puts his fevered arm around Mrs. Marchmont’s neck, as she kisses his parched lips, and he lisps out—

“Dood aunty ’Ester, do stay wid Freddy.”

Soothingly Mrs. Marchmont nurses the little sufferer, and administers the cooling remedies, until his haggard eyes close in a sleep he has not known for days. She lifts her heart in silent gratitude to God that He has permitted her thus to spend the night in relieving the sufferings of these neglected ones. For no paid skill can compare with the thousand voluntary attentions of keen-sighted affection. True womanly love bends over its object, hearing the first breathing of a wish, and its perceptions intuitively catch the meaning of a glance, while the step and the hand and the very air is hushed lest the unquiet nerves should be startled again. Who that received from a mercenary hireling those stinted services so unwillingly rendered, but shrinks from encountering illness or suffering in any form. And harder yet is the lot of a helpless child, on whom no eyes of love can look but those of strangers. God help the little one who knows not a mother’s love!

It is a tender and a profitable season spent in that apartment of suffering, with these little ones trembling on the brink of the grave. Hester thought of

her own little one whom she has been compelled to leave, and in faith commits her to the watch-care of an Eye that never slumbers. And as she sees now the love of fashionable amusements sears the heart and renders callous the natural affections, she blesses the grace which has opened her eyes to see their sin and folly ere it be too late.

Freddy is still sleeping, and little Ellie breathes somewhat more easily, when the mother enters the room. Hester raises her finger, lest her sister's voice should arouse the little slumberer, and Mrs. Stoneman whispers in her ear that supper is now ready and she *must* come down. And so Mrs. Marchmont steps lightly out and lingers a moment in the dressing room to adjust whatever may have become disarranged in her attire. Hester is a beautiful woman, and Marchmont proudly leads her to the feast, while plainer ladies cast glances at each other, as it is known that "Mrs. Marchmont has become a *Methodist*."

Hester sees and understands all, yet realizing her position, she watches firmly, remembering the counsel of her friend. She is polite and social without descending to the usual frivolities, and repels with a quiet dignity any attempts to ridicule her new code of action. All see there is a change, but somehow it is one they cannot define.

Supper is over, and Mr. Marchmont leads his wife to the door of the card-room, where several ladies

and their partners are already commencing the games.

"Oh, here is Mrs. Marchmont," exclaims one. "I would rather try a hand with her than any one I know."

Mrs. Stoneman immediately adds—"Oh, yes, Hester, I'm sure you cannot refuse to play *once*; indeed you *must*."

"Mary, you must excuse me, I cannot play to-night," is the reply uttered in a low, calm voice, and a manner expressive of the most perfect decision. Then taking a seat near the door, she inwardly resolves to escape as soon as possible. Sounds of music and dancing greet her ears from an adjacent room, but the tones seem blended with the groans of the little sufferers above.

Seeking an opportunity, Hester slips up stairs, and is again in the nursery, where she remains watching by the sick infants, and arranging matters for their greater comfort on the morrow, until the company have all dispersed. And now, from both sister and husband, she receives a united storm of anger and abuse. It is in vain to reply; no argument *she* could use would be heeded or understood—and so she bears it meekly, looking upward for strength, and thanking the Lord that she has been saved from mingling in the vain pursuits of the night, and permitted to do good instead of evil.

On the day succeeding the fete, poor little Ellie was removed to the country, and after a long time recovered. Mrs. Marchmont visited her dear little Freddy daily, and spent many hours each night endeavoring to save him, but in vain ; he was taken away from the evil to come. The week succeeding that " splendid entertainment," witnessed an assembling in the same mansion for a far different purpose. As the mother gazed into the coffin, and saw the little being she had so cruelly neglected, folded in the cold arms of death, a few natural tears dropped from her eyes, and perhaps some emotions of regret that she had loved pleasure more than duty, passed over her spirit, but it was too late for repentance. Another fashionable mother in attendance at the funeral, observing that Mrs. Stoneman wept, remarked to an acquaintance—

" God Almighty has never been so kind as to knock at *my* door, to take any of *my* children from me ; all my brats are spared !"

In less than five months from that time, however, God *did* " knock at *her* door," and in kindness bore away to His fold above, ALL of the little ones who called this heartless woman mother. Oh, Fashion, sinful Fashion ! thou art more cruel than the grave ! How truly did one who walked by faith, write with an unerring pen, " She that liveth in pleasure is

dead while she liveth ;" dead to the holiest of natural affections ; dead to all convictions of duty ; dead to her accountability as guardian of the immortal beings God has entrusted to her care.

CHAPTER X.

FARTHER SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN TREASURES.

HESTER Marchmont's hopes in regard to attending on the ministry of "the dipper," and a consequent solving of the problem of baptism, were doomed to be suddenly frustrated. A removal of residence was to take her from the sphere in which she had hoped to acquire the long-desired knowledge. Mr. Marchmont had contracted "debts of honor," which greatly impaired his establishment in London, and as he owned an estate in Cardiff, Glamorganshire, Wales, his friends advised him to go there for a time, until affairs should improve. Hester cheerfully acceded to the proposal in the hope that the retirement of that quiet and wildly romantic region would have an influence soothing to his stormy passions, and perhaps in reforming his dissolute habits. But she was doomed to disappointment, for here, only on a diminished scale, were the same temptations and excitements which existed in London. Attentions were paid to Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont by all the

fashionable families of the place, who regarded visitors from the city of London as the very magnets of society. Occasionally Hester would accompany her husband to a place of amusement, or to a private entertainment, but her heart was not there, and he always abused her on their return for being "such a fool as to let everybody see she was a — Methodist."

While in this locality, Mrs. Marchmont endeavored to seek out some one who could enlighten her on the subject which occupied the second place in her mind. But no one knew of any other baptism than that practised by the mother church, neither could she find in any work she read the information she sought. The way was hedged in, her path lay in the old beaten route of the Established Church; all her friends' and acquaintances were of the same class—how could she hear of the despised sect called Baptists? She was laughed at for trying to discover something which had never existed; and at last began to wonder why the Scripture had enjoined a practice which found no followers.

Hester Marchmont, in time, became the mother of another young immortal, whom God permitted to live for a time to share her love and brighten her hours of darkness and trial. Six times ere her little Lizzie had entered this world, Mrs. Marchmont had borne the sorrows of a mother in vain. But Lizzie,

•

the lovely and the gentle had been spared, and now another drop of bliss was added to her cup. In her quiet home she could now remain to care for her little ones and enjoy her religion, while her husband rushed madly onward in his career of wickedness.

To those who enter into them with the *spirit* and with the understanding, the services of the Established Church have great power to strengthen and encourage a devotional spirit. The sublime sentiments of the Liturgy elicit the fullest responses of a heart which has been truly converted. And so in her private and family prayers Mrs. Marchmont still followed the prescribed rules, knowing as yet no better way. It is true, extempore prayers and ejaculations were uttered by her almost hourly, but in leading her little Lizzie to the mercy seat, she still followed the teachings of the church. And Lizzie listened with the gravity of a woman to the reading of the Bible, long before she knew the meaning of a word. Her gentle and obedient spirit was the balm which softened the rough passages in her mother's daily walks.

But now this quiet must be disturbed, and Mrs. Marchmont must yield to her husband's determination to return to London. It would be useless, because uninteresting, to describe the removal and the journey, the reunion with former friends, and the re-entering into a London home. All these have pass-

ed, and now Hester has once more time to continue her search after baptism. *This* time she is determined to set out in earnest, and remembering her Oxfordshire friends, she resolves on applying to several of the Canons of Oxford, with whom she was well acquainted. She was not willing to abide by the testimony of *one* man, and therefore wrote to several a request that they would favor her with a literal translation of the word "*baptizo*" into English. Their answers were one and the same, though each was ignorant of Hester's application to the other—and read thus—"To dip ; to plunge ; to wash all over, as you wash your tables, chairs, &c., &c." But with this Mrs. Marchmont was not fully satisfied, and resolved on seeking still further. With several Jewish families, she had for years been on the most friendly terms, and calling on them in the rounds of her visit, she begged them to give her the meaning of baptizo in *Hebrew*. They informed her it was literally "baptizing," and explained it by a reference to the custom of the Jewish ladies preparing a vat full of water in the house of a bride elect, putting her into it and washing her all over, head and feet also, before the solemnization of the marriage ceremony. Determined to press still further, Hester called on an aged Rabbi of the Jews, in whose family she had formerly been quite intimate, and taking her little pocket Testament, opened to those passages

which describe the baptism of Jesus, and those of the apostles.

"Rabbi," said Hester, "pardon me while I read a verse in our Testament, which I very much wish you to explain."

"What is it, my daughter?" said the aged man, who was remarkable for his urbanity.

Mrs. Marchmont then read to him various portions in the different Gospels which portray these events, and also the baptism of the eunuch.

"And now, Rabbi, what do you understand by 'baptism,' baptizing, baptized, &c.?"

"I understand the burying of the whole person in water; and were I to become a Christian, I should certainly follow the example of Him you call Messiah."

Quite interested in Mrs. Marchmont's spirit of inquiry, which he considered very remarkable in a lady, the Rabbi took great pains to explain the Hebrew signification of many other passages, particularly that of Hebrews, tenth chapter and twenty-second verse. Hester thanked him with the sincerest warmth.

Mrs. Marchmont's next step was to call on the clergyman of St. John's, Southwark, and reveal to him her long search and the result of her inquiries. He seemed surprised that such a subject should have

been the cause of so much anxiety and exertion ; and inquired if she was not satisfied.

" I have called, sir," was her reply, " to ask if you will *baptize* me."

" Have you never been baptized ?"

" No, sir ; I have only been *christened*."

" How is that, madam ?"

Hester opened her prayer-book, (which is in many places different from the American version,) and pointed him to that passage where it declares—" The child shall be *dipped* verily in water, or shall have water *poured* upon it, according to the health of the child," remarking, when she had read it, " Neither of these have been done to me, for I have often heard my godmother relate how I cried when I was *sprinkled*."

" Well, Mrs. Marchmont, if you insist on my *baptizing* you, as you call it, I suppose I must do it or lose my gown ; but I had rather not, for there are plenty of men even in our church in London who *believe* in it, and will gladly do it for you."

This clergyman well knew there were Baptists in London, and knew also who they were. But it is supposed he felt unwilling to lose such a parishioner as Mr. Marchmont, and therefore kept silent on the very subject which would soonest have brought peace to her mind. As the case now stood, Mrs.

Marchmont's perplexity was not relieved, it had only taken another form.

The following week Hester sought the society of her friend, Mrs. Browning, for the purpose of consulting her respecting this new phase of her anxiety. But, alas! she knew nothing of Baptists, nor could imagine to whom the clergyman of St. John's referred, but supposed that all dissenters, except the Free Church of Scotland, went by the name of Methodists. In the course of conversation, Mrs. Browning mentioned having some time before dropped in at the church of the Rev. J. Stevenson, and spoke of his high character and remarkable benevolence. Never dreaming he was a *Baptist*, she recommended Hester to go the next Sabbath and hear him, as his sermons were pre-eminently spiritual. Mrs. Marchmont gladly agreed to go.

The ensuing Sabbath morning, Hester with her friend was at the door of Rev. Mr. Stevenson's church. On being shown into a pew, they found the pulpit occupied by a tall, dignified man, whose name Mrs. Browning did not know. He announced as his text, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." It was a Gospel sermon, apparently delivered extempore, and rich in Gospel lore and love to souls. How sweetly upon the anxious soul of Hester Marchmont fell the influence of the precious truths thus earnestly spoken. The conviction that she was in-

deed born of God, and had chosen Jesus as her only hope for eternity, was made clearer to her mind, and she rejoiced in God her Saviour.

The aged minister sat down, and then arose a small, pale, thin man, whom her friend told her in a whisper was Mr. Stevenson. He remarked that "if there were any in the congregation who felt almost persuaded to be Christians, he would be glad to have them tarry after the conclusion of the services, for conversation on the important theme. And if any who wished to converse could not remain, he would be pleased to see them at his residence at ten o'clock the next morning. Mrs. Marchmont could not remain on account of her children, even if she had dared, but she observed to her friend, "How I should love to converse with that man!"

The hour of ten on the next morning found Hester at the minister's door. She was very kindly received, and freely related her history of darkness and struggles and searching. "Believe and be baptized," had been the echo of her first impressions when alone in her room, and it had reverberated through the halls of her soul every day since that hour. Very patiently did the meek, pale man listen until Hester had told her story, and then kindly addressed her thus—

"My sister, you seem satisfied that the Lord has blessed you, and that you ought to be baptized; and now what doth hinder you?"

"I do not know any one who believes in this baptism. Our parish clergyman would do it, but he does not believe in it."

"Well, my sister, *I* will baptize you."

"But do you *believe* in it, sir?"

The minister started and smiled.

"Why, what difference would it make to you whether *I* believe in it or not?"

"I think I should not feel right to have any person baptize me who was not a believer in it himself."

The good man wept.

"My dear sister, I am a *Baptist*, one of those who believe our Lord and Master was buried beneath the wave, and that his followers should do likewise."

It was now Mrs. Marchmont's turn to weep. The long pent up feelings of her soul gushed out, the portals of the spirit were let loose, and she sobbed out tears of joy. Hither had the Lord led her this morning to His long-sought people; here was the way opened for her to obey His commands.

"Do you know, my sister, that while you come to me for instruction, I have been taught of you? For never before did the necessity of the administrator's personal belief appear so clearly evident to my mind."

"And *when* will you baptize me, sir?" was now Hester's inquiry.

"Just as soon as the church can be made acquainted

ed with your wishes, and decide concerning them. Come to us next Sabbath day, and we will converse with you."

This reply led Hester to request information of the regulations of the church, its requirements, its discipline, and greatly was she surprised to learn of the numbers and resources of a people whose very existence, if known to her friends, was ignored by all.

After a season of prayer, Mrs. Marchmont left the minister's dwelling with an enlightened mind and a happy heart, rejoicing that she had found the truth as it is in Jesus.

CHAPTER XI.

CHURCH MEETINGS.—HESTER'S BAPTISM.

THE history of Hester Marchmont, and her desire for baptism, was made known to the church. And on the ensuing Lord's day it was proposed that the deacons should visit her. Hester was obliged to decline the offer, stating as the reason, Mr. Marchmont's contempt for religion, and her fear that, though as a gentleman he would receive them, still if he knew the object of their visit, most trying scenes would succeed. And more than that, he would discover her recent movement, and prevent her from enjoying the liberty with which she was now favored. Then arose the question, how would he bear to know that she was to be baptized? Her answer was that her intention must be kept profoundly secret, or he would prevent it by every means in his power.

Mrs. Marchmont then, at Mr. Stevenson's request, agreed to attend a meeting of the church on that evening, and there relate the history of her awakening and conversion, which she did, and the church

unanimously agreed to receive her. Preparations were accordingly made, and her baptism, with that of several others, appointed for the following Sabbath. What strange delight filled the heart of Hester as she looked round upon these warm-hearted, loving disciples of the Redeemer, and saw the simple solemnity of their proceedings, and felt that she was soon to be one of them—their Saviour, her Saviour—their welfare her's also. She could not help the contrast which so vividly presented itself to her mind, between the scriptural primitiveness of these Baptists, and the grandeur and pomp, and forms and fashion of the church in which she had been educated. In her heart she bade it farewell forever—soon she would publicly renounce her church, and soon, too, would those who were now her friends renounce *her*. Her heart quailed for a moment before the coming storm—but she looked to Christ—and all was peace. With a heart filled to overflowing, she received the warm greetings of the pastor and his members, and returned to her home strengthened for expected trials.

It is Saturday night. Mrs. Marchmont has read the evening prayer with her little Lizzie, and has heard her repeat her childish hymn of praise, and the nurse has disrobed Lizzie and the babe, and both are slumbering sweetly in their little beds. Hester's

thoughts are full of the solemn step she is to take on the morrow, and she is seated at her table reading in that book which is a light to her path and a lamp to her feet. Anon she stops, and resting her head upon her hand, asks God to so order events that the Sabbath shall be one of peace. For she cannot now see how she will elude the observation of her husband and his consequent abuse. He will remain out all night, and in the morning most probably will exact attentions which will interfere with proposed arrangements.

It is yet quite early—the door opens, and Marchmont enters, apparently in high spirits.

“Come, Wide-awake, you must have my clothes all arranged this evening, for I must start bright and early in the morning for G——. We fellows are going to have a grand time there, for H—— gives a splendid entertainment. I’m going to bed right off, and tell John to call me at six—not a minute later.”

Here is relief, truly. Much as Hester regrets the manner in which her husband will spend the precious hours of the holy day, she knows it would be no better were he to remain at home. She believes this arrangement to be a peculiar interposition of Providence in her behalf, for well she knows that if Marchmont had any idea of the act she was going to perform, he would not hesitate to prevent it entirely, and her heart sickens at the very thought. So she

makes all the arrangements, and gives all the orders he has required.

She commits herself to God, and several hours earlier than she is usually permitted, her head is resting on her pillow. "For so he giveth His beloved sleep."

The morning of the Lord's day. How peacefully now upon the dark and dingy streets of London, the beams of orient light are slowly rising. Silence still reigns in the great city, and heavy slumbers weigh down the eyelids of the weary from toil, and the weary from dissipation. A few here and there, who love the God of the Sabbath, have arisen from their beds, and in the calm and silence of the morning, are preparing themselves for the worship of the Most High, by seeking communion with the Intercessor at His mercy-seat. Hester Marchmont is one of these. A few there are, too, who are planning this day a double service of sin and Satan, and Herbert Marchmont is one of these. Oh, house divided ! may God unite thee ! Long ere the hour for morning service, Marchmont and his companions have left the city behind, and are wending their mad way through the peaceful suburbs of London to the scene of revelry.

Hester Marchmont has prepared her little daughter to attend the church with her, and bids her be a good child, and sit very still, for mother is going to do as Jesus did, and be baptized. Wonderingly the child looks in her mother's face, while in language

adapted to her comprehension, she tells her the beautiful story of the Saviour's baptism. And now the mother and child are on their way to the church, and soon it is reached. They are met at the door by the deacons and a few of the sisters, and are conducted to the vestry. Here little Lizzie looks on with wonder while she sees her mother and six other happy mortals robed for the baptism. Entering the church, the candidates and their attending friends are seated near the font. How happy, how solemn they look in their white robes! so truly emblematical, so suggestive of purity and holiness.

The subject of discourse chosen for this occasion, is found in the declaration—"I do set my bow in the cloud," &c., and the sermon is just such an one as true believers love to hear. The chapel is filled to excess with eager listeners and those who have come to look on, but Mrs. Marchmont, wrapped in delightful meditation, feels no trembling, nor fear, nor hesitation. The happy candidates rise and surround the font, while Mr. Stevenson reads out a joyful hymn, which multitudes of voices unite in singing. Every line is imprinted on the heart of Hester, and she sings with the spirit if not with the voice.

Jesus, we come at thy command,
Now on the water's brink we stand,
Ready to sink beneath the wave,
A lovely emblem of the grave.

Let neither fear, nor shame, nor pride,
Divert our steady feet aside,
'Tis thus appointed in thy name,
We venture down into the stream.

Behold, ye multitudes, behold !
This was the way in days of old ;
Then where's the fear, and where's the shame,
While we're baptized in Jesus' name ?"

ost impressively has the good pastor read the
n, and at the last verse he lifts his eyes and
ls, by his manner appealing eloquently to the
d looking down upon the candidates. The
ce is breathless here, yet amidst this dense
ng there are tearful eyes, and hearts which are
ling to the sweet influences of truth.

neerfully Hester gives her hand to the minister,
unflinching, nay, triumphantly, she walks with
into the miniature Jordan. Is there on earth a
r sight than this baptism like unto the Son of
, this yielding to the likeness of His death and
rection? Amid the strains of solemn praise, the
and mother rises from her vow of obedience,
countenance beaming with the joy of her heart.
has given herself to the Lord forever—she is
by an everlasting covenant. Come joy or sor-
pleasure or pain, life or death, all shall be ac-
ed at the Master's hand.

tle Lizzie has been a serious spectator of all

that has passed—very quietly she has gazed, but when she sees her mother led away out of her sight, her little heart fears that she has gone away never to return, and the quivering lips give place to tears and sobs. But the friend who has her in charge, soothingly caresses her, saying—

“Your ma has only gone to get her bonnet ; she will soon come back, and then she will take Lizzie home.”

And the little girl's grief is hushed, and soon she is led to her happy mother. Ah, cling to each other, mother and child, for you will soon be all the world to each other.

Evening comes. The day has been full of solemn interest, and now in the still evening hour, the churches are to commemorate the death of their risen Redeemer. Mrs. Marchmont has cared for the comfort of her babe, and it is ready for its early repose, but the little girl pleads—

“Ma, may I go to see Christ's supper too ?”

So the mother leads again her darling to the house of God, and seats her by her side, while she partakes of the solemn ordinance. Greatly is she strengthened in her love and obedience by the privilege she is enjoying. She is learning now the true meaning of Christian fellowship. She is now a member of Christ's church, and his people are her people.

The service is over at a reasonable hour, and several of the sisters and their husbands accompany her to her door. Marchmont will not return until to-morrow, and a night of rest is her's again. She kneels in prayer with her little daughter, and giving her the good-night kiss, is surprised by the question—

“You took de tup of tanksgibin' to-night, mother, didn't you? You tall on de name of the Lord?”

The seed is beginning to spring up surely, when a child of five can have such an understanding of the Lord's Supper! And so the mother prays and resolves to bring up her little ones in the knowledge of that book which has taught her the way of life. Soon all is quiet, and Hester and her little ones are slumbering beneath an ever-watchful Eye.

CHAPTER XII.

PERSECUTION.

THE clock told the hour of two before Herbert Marchmont and his companions returned from their revels. He came home in good humor, and awaking his wife, commenced a relation of the scenes of the day, the exciting and glorious chase, the sports, the superior wines, the toasts, &c., &c. Hester was obliged to listen patiently till he had completed his narrative of sin, and then replied—

“ You have told me of *your* enjoyments—don’t you want to know something of *mine* ?”

“ Why, yes, I don’t care, if your story’s rich.”

“ Well, I have to-day seen a *baptism* for the first time.”

“ You have—well, who was dipped ?”

“ I do not know the names of any *save* one, though there were several.”

“ Who was that one ?”

“ It was myself.”

"Good—the next thing I shall hear, you'll be going out preaching."

"Oh, no, I shall never do that, you need not fear."

Marchmont sprung from his bed, as if stung, and going to his drawers took out his flute and began to play "Highland Reel," "Jack, my Lad," and other low tunes, dancing round the room, and behaving like a maniac.

The children and servants were roused by his noise, and then he jumped on the bed and continued playing, while the babe cried in affright. After a time, becoming soberer, and finding this conduct was exposing himself to the nurses in the next room, he gave up his antics, and retired to bed where Hester was secretly weeping—for to betray her suffering would only expose her to still greater annoyance. At last this game being played out, Marchmont commenced in earnest a torrent of abuse which Hester bore in silence until the morning, and the slumbers of her husband afforded her some respite.

From this morning it seemed as if the demons of malice and cruelty took full possession of the soul of Herbert Marchmont, and hatred of his wife seemed his absorbing passion. Ridicule was not now the weapon he wielded, for he knew it would not avail, neither would trifling annoyances affect a decision like her's. She had chosen to enter on a path widely divergent from that in which his feet were traveling,

and he exerted his ingenuity to the utmost, to lacerate both her mind and her body.

Hester's naturally high and haughty spirit, could ill brook such treatment from the man who had vowed to love, cherish, and protect her ; but she had taken up her cross, knowing before what it would be, and she resolved to bear it, with the assistance of Him who is the strengthener of his people.

Marchmont's greatest delight was to keep his watching until a late hour of the night, and then to enter with his private key, and stealing up stairs without his shoes, burst into her presence before she could hide her Bible. Taking it from her, with oaths, he would fling it into the water or into the fire, and then abuse her with kicks and blows. In vain she would ask him what harm she had done ; in vain she would appeal to him as her husband ; his only reply was—

“That's what you deserve for your dipping, and Bible reading.”

It was only by stealth, now, that she could attend the church of her choice. Marchmont was sure to be at her side on the Sabbath, and with mock politeness, offers to attend her to church. She would reply :—

“I wish to go to my own meeting, and if you will accompany me, it will be all right.”

But this was never his purpose, and when the

treet was gained, which led to the Established Church, he would seize her arm in a cruelly ingenious manner, which no one else could perceive, and force her to go the way he chose. Seldom, even on the days of the week, could she elude his watchfulness, so as to attend the meetings of the church, or those for prayer.

Hester had always found in her mother a friend and comforter in trouble. In leaving the national church, she knew she should incur her displeasure—but, little did she imagine the nature of that displeasure. Some weeks after baptism, she wrote to her mother a brief history of her change of heart, and her new views of baptism, with the consequent union of herself to the Baptists. Hoping for sympathy, she related her husband's cruel treatment, and begged her mother to make her a visit, and endeavor to mollify his continued anger. An answer soon arrived, but it was such as to draw the hot tears from her eyes, and send her to her God as her only friend. It was but a brief note, yet comprised a volume of cruelty:—

“HESTER,—

“You have ruined yourself, and disgraced your friends by leaving the holy church in which you were born and brought up, and going in with a set of low heretics, whom nobody knows. I renounce you forever.—Henceforth you are no laughter of mine, and I never wish to see your face again. As

to your husband, you have no right to complain ; you took him 'for better and for worse,' and his treatment is no more than what you might expect from a man, who feels that you have disgraced him ; so do not trouble me with any more of your letters.

CLARA WARWICK."

In view of facts like these, and thousands of others in the history of the past, the question arises,—How much greater is the charity and liberality of the church of England than that of Rome ? Is not Rome the mother still ? and do not her children drink from their infancy the spirit of intolerance and exclusiveness ? and when the day of retribution comes, will they not stand side by side, as persecutors of the saints of God ?

Language is powerless to describe the emotions of Mrs. Marchmont, while reading the cruel epistle of her only parent—she felt herself an alien from all who were near and dear to her by the ties of nature, and repairing to her closet, poured out before God strong cries and tears. And when did He violate his promise ? "Call upon ME in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." NEVER ! and not long did this afflicted believer plead for deliverance, till it came—a sweet and holy peace filling her soul, and a faith, which enabled her to see beyond this dark and wide-spread cloud, the glory of the Son of Righteousness, and a crown, such as those wear, who, persevering unto the end, are made royal forever. Girding on

strength and patience, she went forth to meet her trials, in His name, whose "strength was made perfect in her weakness."

Christian friends stepped forth to encourage and cheer one, for whom Satan seemed to struggle so fiercely. Mrs. Marchmont could not conceal the circumstances which environed her, for her husband and her sisters seemed to delight in exposing the hatred they entertained towards one whom they regarded as a "fanatic;" all intercourse between them was cut off entirely—not even admitting the recognition of each other by look or word.

As the summer advanced, and Mrs. Marchmont knew that her husband would compel her to visit the watering places, she looked forward to still greater trials; but the Son had mingled in her cup of bitterness, one mercy drop—He had sent, in the form of her little daughter, a comforting angel. Remarkably frail from her birth, she had been the especial object of her mother's care and solicitude; had shared her hours of closet devotion, and attendance on the means of grace. God seemed to have called this child, at an age so early, that few believed her stay on earth could be prolonged. She had seemed from her infancy to look to heaven, with the words on her lips, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." When this gentle child found all intercourse with grandmother, uncles, aunts and consins interdicted; when she saw

the cruelty, daily practised upon her mother ; and learned as well as she could understand, the motives which actuated all these proceedings ; her whispers of love, and her overheard supplications to Jesus, in her mother's behalf, were balm indeed to a wounded spirit.

The time soon came to leave for Margate, and submissively Mrs. Marchmont had made her preparations. The night previous to their departure, she drew her daughter with her into the room occupied by her sleeping little ones, and then and there, with unusual solemnity, committed them and herself to the protection of a Father in Heaven. Lizzie, at the close, crept softly to her mother's side, and tenderly inquired :—

“What for you looking so sorry ? 'Cause we be goin' to-morrow ?”

“Yes, darling,” replied the weeping mother.

“Don't cry, ma ; perhaps papa will be kinder there, and if he isn't, ma, haven't you drawn waters out of the wells o' salvation ?”

This she said in allusion to her mother's baptism, giving it a scripture meaning, which surprised even Mrs. Marchmont. How little knew that sympathising child of the warfare raging in her mother's heart.

Margate had often been the scene of Mrs. Marchmont's triumphs of vanity, and few of the fashionable

crowd who thronged its pavilions, knew that she who had been the centre of attraction, and the "bright particular star" of every entertainment, had become "a new creature;" that "old things had passed away," and she was to mingle no more with "the gay, licentious crowd," as one of themselves. Hence Mr. Marchmont availed himself of this ignorance, to open upon his wife the flood-gates of ridicule and scorn, by introducing her as a "fanatic," who had united herself with a set of *dippers*, and telling his associates in volatility and dissipation, that "she would soon appear in public as a *preacher*—was only getting ready, &c." When in private with her, the vilest of epithets were applied to her continually, and often blows, which left their mark. Hester's mother and her sisters were among the throng, but shunned her entirely; while her husband would frequently not see her for days together, so that the six weeks of her sojourn in that rendezvous of fashion, was wearisome in the extreme. With not one Christian friend to speak a word of consolation, her time was passed mostly within doors, in attending to her little ones, reading her Bible, praying, and instructing the little daughter, who was her only companion. As often as the crushing sense of her loneliness and persecution would sweep across her spirit, would she retire, and bowing before a throne of grace, find consolation, and gather strength for renewed conflicts.

She had found peace in believing, through the medium of prayer, and having been taught in such a school, it became her habit, daily, to lean upon that Arm which had wrought salvation for her, in the midst of those who knew not God.

Upon their return to London, Mr. Marchmont absented himself from home for more than a week, which afforded his wife a season of quiet. When at last he came, it seemed that he had brought with him ten-fold more of the spirit of hell, and the whole household was kept from morning to night, and frequently whole nights also, in a state of wretchedness and tumult. If Hester was engaged upon a piece of needlework, he would snatch it from her, and throw it into the fire ; or, if there was no fire, he would find some other way to destroy it—if she wept, he would kick her until she fainted, and then leave her to the care of the servants, who often wept over her cruel treatment ; and not one of them dared appear in his presence, unless it was unavoidable. In his nightly rounds of debauch, he would compel her to sit up for him, and then, stealing upon her before she could be aware, would snatch the Bible from her hands, and throw it into the water, or upon the grate. If he found her kneeling, he would pull her by the hair of her head, and kick her out of the room. In his tyrannical caprice, he would allow no one but herself to *prepare* his food, and often, when she thought she


had exactly succeeded in pleasing his depraved appetite, would he throw both dishes and food out of the window, or into the fire, and compel her to make another effort to satisfy his demands. What, but GRACE, could have sustained the spirit of any woman under such provocations? How hard was it for the high-spirited Hester to repress the angry retort; to control the flashing eye, and glowing cheek, and the agitated heart's quickened pulsations? Ah, there is plenitude in faith, equal to the fullest demands of a fallen nature; and the cruelty and wickedness of Mr. Marchmont is easily accounted for, on the principles of natural depravity. The heart left to act out its native enmity to God, reveals itself in its true character, as being guided by the Prince of Darkness. Long since did our Saviour declare,—“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye *will do*,”—and the history of man still attests the truth of this declaration.

Herbert Marchmont was not naturally of a ferocious temper, but long years of indulgence in sin, and daily and hourly draughts at the wine bottle and the punch-bowl, had heated his blood, and rendered him inflammatory to the slightest cause. His libations had increased greatly since his wife's change of sentiments and conduct, and he seldom entered her presence excepting in a state of excitement. His children and the servants fled from him, and his poor

wife was made to experience the full weight of his ungoverned passions.

But, why did not Hester leave her husband, and with her little ones retire to some shelter from these abuses? Ah! this was a question often presented to her mind, and sometimes even thought of with seriousness; but the honor of her Christian name was at stake. By leaving the Established Church, she had virtually assumed higher ground as a Christian, and her husband and relatives believing the step she had taken to be merely a self-willed whim, thought by ridicule and persecution, she would eventually be driven from her position, and proved to be of the same principles as themselves. Had she manifested impatience or anger, she would have heard loud taunts hurled at her Christian profession, and no credence would have been accorded to after explanations. Had she attempted to obtain a divorce, the hue and cry would every where have been heard,—“These *dippers* are separaters of man and wife; the most solemn obligations are nothing to them.” Mrs. Marchmont was the only representative of “a sect every where spoken against,” despised and misrepresented, to be found in the circles of rank and wealth, which comprised so many of her relatives and acquaintances; and when these witnessed the sufferings caused by the cruelty of her husband, they would repeat to her the comforting

assurance that "she had brought all these things upon herself, by uniting with the *Methodists*." Besides, an application for a divorce is attended, in the courts of England, with the heaviest expenses, sufficient in the tedious formalities of Chancery, to swallow a fortune, and the courts, often, consuming years in the examination of the cases, and in unnecessary delays. No course was left for Hester but submission—no other way, than to bear meekly and bravely the cross laid upon her, and "the discipline of storms." Though much of this discipline was such as the mind turns horror-stricken from contemplating, and the tongue and the pen recoil from describing—the martyr-wife was supported under all—how, the Comforter Himself shall reveal. In reply to the reproaches and taunts of her relatives, frequently conveyed to her ear, she often quoted the words of the Master, "Whoso loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me;" adding, that she "could love the Saviour, and them also, that is, their souls, though not their actions." Mrs. Marchmont seized the first opportunity of release, after each act of persecution, to retire to her closet—there, upon her knees, the stricken believer would wrestle in agony and tears, for the power of God to convert her husband; for grace to drink the cup; for strength to bear the cross. How many such *moments*, in which *hours* seemed to be concentrated, did Hester snatch



at intervals through each day of her wearisome painful pilgrimage to Zion ; and how indescribable the peace which often filled her soul before she had risen ! She believed, she *felt*, the shadow of the Almighty to be over her, and that in His own good time, He would appear for her relief. Oh ! ye unbelievers, ye cold-hearted backsliders, ye lukewarm Christians, who plead ye have no time, no heart for prayer—that your trials are so great you cannot enjoy religion—let the example of this persecuted wife stimulate you to “ feel after the Lord, if haply, ye may find Him.”

When, in after years, Hester related these trials to a friend, and the inquiry was made, “ How could ye possibly bear so much ? ” she replied—

“ *By the grace of God*, I am what I am. I bore them, not in my own strength, but in *His* who had borne my sins for me. My mind often reverted to the long train of martyrs who had sealed the truth in fire and blood, and sometimes the tempter would whisper the presumptuous thought, that my sufferings were greater than theirs, because my persecutions were not inflicted by strangers or enemies, but by my kindred, and my husband, who had promised before God and man, to “ love, cherish, and protect me, while I lived. Once, in the extremity of my distress, the enemy of souls suggested, “ would it not be better to give up serving God *outwardly*, wh

matters are thus, and be content to worship Him in thy *heart* ?” But by grace, I was enabled to see the wickedness of the suggestion, to banish it, and to say from my heart, “Blessed be God, who hath delivered his servant !”

CHAPTER XIII.

WORKING FOR THE MASTER.

THE church with which Mrs. Marchmont had become connected, were well acquainted with her reputation as a member of the Church of England. They had heard of her strict performance of church exercises, her deeds of charity, and had learned her actual and relative position in society. The pastor and deacons knew how painful had been her history, since she had left the circles of fashion, and very wisely concluded, that *active usefulness* in the cause of Christ, would afford the best outward support to be gained under trials like hers. She was soon requested to become a member of the "visiting committee," whose duty it was to attend to the wants of the poor within the church, collect funds for their use, and provide them with comforts. She was also appointed a tract distributor for two districts. There was work, indeed, for a beginner in the Christian life, especially when it was added to the offices she already

filled in the charitable associations of the city, such as the supervision of the hospital for women, in which many of the high-born ladies of London were engaged, and visitor of the poor, in certain parish districts. But Hester shrunk not from the work, nor refused to perform it, but entered into it heartily; remembering how zealous she had been in the pursuit of worldly pleasures, and resolving to consecrate all her powers to the service of Him, who had so signally "called her from darkness unto light." Her family was not large, and her household arrangements on a scale so systematic, that certain portions of each day were always for leisure, while all were in health. Mr. Marchmont was often from home for days together, returning only for a few hours at a time, or in the silence of night; and her little Lizzie was of an age to accompany her, whenever the distance was not too great.

Behold! the disciple going forth on her mission of love. She has been taught by the Word and the Spirit alone, and by means of the Word, Jesus has been revealed as the only Saviour. Prayer has been her only shelter from the storms of the world, leading her to the Rock of Ages. Will she not all her life long hold up the Word, the Spirit, and the Saviour, to those who know them not? Most certainly she will. Cheerfully Mrs. Marchmont places within her own reticule one parcel of tracts, and

another within that of her little daughter—mother and child set forth to seek the residence of an experienced sister in the church, who is to shew her the mode of performing these new duties. She has acquainted no one of her family with the character of her errands, well-knowing that if they came to the knowledge of her husband, an avalanche of wrath would be the consequence, as well as an entire cessation of all future proceedings. Looking upward, as onward she goes, mentally asking wisdom and strength for the undertaking, Hester Marchmont and the good sister are soon threading the alleys and by-places of the great city. Mrs. Marchmont and her child are clothed in attire suitable for such occasions, plain, yet denoting her rank in life—and articles dictated by the usual common sense of the women of England. Here are streets where the poor are congregated by thousands ; where the vile and the miserable are the only inhabitants ; but unharmed, these holy-hearted women fearlessly enter the dingy abodes, pass up the rickety stairs, and carry the sunlight of Gospel charity into these haunts of darkness and sin. The gentle and delicate child clasps tightly her mother's hand, but she knows the meaning of the pressure, which is returned, for it says, " fear not." With smiles in her eyes, and kind words on her lips, each of the ladies inquires of the wretched objects before them, concerning their temporal wants, be-

stow some little tokens of good, and then Mrs. Marchmont fearlessly avowing her own mode of instruction, takes out her pocket Bible. With a felicity attained by early experience in such exercises, she seems to select the very portion best adapted to the situation of those before her. A few verses only suffice for the present, a very few, they will be more easily remembered—then she adds a few explanatory words if needed, and drops on her knees, on the soiled floor of the dirty apartment. The good sister weeps for joy, that Hester has struck out so straight a path in the road upon which she has entered. The poor outcasts wonder at her, and are no doubt suspicious as to her real motives; but in departing, she slips into the hand of each a small sum of money, and tells them she will come again soon. The signal is given to Lizzie, and her little fingers are quickly in her reticule. Soon, with infantive innocence, but still keeping her mother's hand, she says—

“Here is a pretty book I give you,—you read it, won't you?”

The wan faces gleam strangely on the fair child, whose little heart palpitates as she surveys the tangled masses of filthy hair, hanging over the sunken eyes, and the ragged, soiled and indecent garbs of the wretched beings. One such scene—another, and another, yea, many such, transpire ere the mother and the child return to their home. Sometimes, these

good sisters and tender missionaries are coarsely repulsed ; sometimes insulted in frightful language, but they have expected all this, and even more, remembering " the disciple is not above his Master," " who was despised and rejected of men." But week after week, Mrs. Marchmont, with some friend and her little daughter, continue their ministrations, and succeed in overcoming the ill-will of the wretched beings who are the victims of poverty and vice ; they have taught them there is a world where *sin* cannot enter, but believing, obeying *poverty*, is not turned away. They have learned to look for her coming—to have regard to a more decent appearance of themselves and their miserable abodes—they learn to pray ; and oh ! joy to her, some at the last day, will bless God they ever saw her.

Many, very many, are the scenes of interest which transpired in these visitations. The gathering of families, who had never heard the sound of the Gospel within their own miserable dwellings, or in corners of the street, to listen to the news of salvation from the lips of a missionary—the establishment of Sabbath Schools among themselves—the rescuing from prisons and infamy, and above all, the conversion of sinners, were results which God will one day own.

CHAPTER XIV.

INCIDENTS.

It is not to be supposed that exercises like these could be performed, without causing both mental and physical fatigue. Mrs. Marchmont often found herself, upon her return from such labors, exceedingly prostrated; though it was her privilege to share the blessing of general good health. The *spiritual* strength imparted by these visits of mercy, was an ample compensation for all that might be deemed unpleasant. The contrast in her own situation and those whom she visited day by day; the happiness she enjoyed in lighting with Gospel rays their darkened minds, and influencing them to render themselves and their wretched abodes more comfortable, was an equivalent for all the sufferings she endured at home. This inward happiness enabled her always to receive her husband kindly, let his mood be what it might, or his abuse the vilest he could adopt. Hester now looked through the acts of the sinner to the worth of

the soul, and saw in his treatment of her, an offence against God and himself, and she believed that sooner or later, he would experience remorse or retribution. So she returned for his abuse, nothing but kindness; smiled while her heart was ready to break, and only fled from his presence, when her life was in peril.

To all this the inhuman Marchmont was indifferent, and one day, when she had in an especial manner provided for his comfort, insultingly remarked—

“La! Wide-awake, you’re just like a spaniel, the more you are kicked, the more loving you are.”

Nature sent the indignant blood burning in her cheeks and brow, and lighted up the dark eyes with a lightning flash, but *grace* whispered, “Lean on ME,” and the troubled waves of bitterness were calmed.

The life thus begun in well-doing, was not wearily thrust aside. Possessing great natural energies, both of body and mind, *perseverance* was a marked trait in the mental character of Mrs. Marchmont. She not only continued in the course she had commenced, but very soon entered other fields of usefulness. Very early in her Christian life she had been influenced, by reading the sacred Word, to commence a system of *economy*, which enabled her to give liberally to all benevolent enterprises she wished, without having cause to obtain funds of her husband. It is well known that the purse of an English wife is generally separate and independent from that of her compan-

ion ; and little did Herbert Marchmont know how widely divergent from his were his wife's daily paths.

And now came trials bearing more directly on the outward existence of Hester Marchmont. The summer of '33, witnessed still deeper plots against her happiness. Mr. Marchmont daily strode, with accelerated steps, the paths of vice ; gambling, with the most insane disregard to the amount of stakes, incapacitating himself, by wine and debauchery, from the power of regaining lost sums, and apparently determined to ruin both himself and his family. Mrs. Marchmont possessed as part of her dowry, several sets of jewelry, exceedingly valuable, which her husband had several times staked and lost ; but which, valuing as the gifts of her mother and other relatives, she had, on each occasion, herself redeemed. She owned, also, a remarkably handsome and valuable service of plate. These Herbert, her husband, again gambled away, unknown to his wife, and in places which it would sully the pen to describe. So low, so utterly degraded had this gambler and inebriate become, that he would have parted with those, who should have been dearer to him than life, sooner than with the liberty of gaming. As it was, presuming too far upon the *Christian* meekness of his wife, which had been exhibited towards him as her *husband*, he scrupled not to sell her to the insults of

another. Finding himself deprived of even a pound to stake, and unable to win back the enormous sums he had lost, he listened to a proposal, made by his creditor, that *Mrs. Marchmont* should redeem the amount due to him. The profane language, the diabolical laughs which followed this disgusting bargain, are not to be portrayed. Yet *once*, this man, who thus degraded his wife, because she had become a *Baptist*, would have taken the life of any one, who had spoken of her in other terms than those of the highest respect. What transformations does the Prince of Darkness accomplish by the aid of his prime ministers—alcohol, cards, and the theatre!

The cowardly debauchee did not, while the affair was pending, resort to his home, and his wife remained unconscious that anything unusual detained him. Engaged in reading, and instructing her children, a ring at the door was followed by the announcement of "Mr. S——," whom *Mrs. Marchmont* recognized as one of her husband's boon companions, who had often visited the house. Receiving him with a cool dignity and politeness, she secretly wondered what could be his errand. With a low bow, he placed in her hand a note of honor, signed by her husband, which told her at one glance they were ruined. The shock nearly overcame her, and her distress was painfully evident in her countenance. The mean creature before her was secretly gratified, and assuming a tone and manner full of kindness, said—

"Madam, you need not suffer so much about this matter, it is in your own power most easily to redeem the whole."

Mrs. Marchmont at first made no reply, but threw upon him a blank stare of amazement; finally, as he seemed waiting for an answer, she inquired—

"How, sir, can *I* have anything to do in this affair?"

"*Mr. Marchmont*, madam," said he, slowly and with emphasis, "has *expressly empowered* me to negotiate with *you* for the cancelling of the whole."

"I do not understand you, sir," said Mrs. M.

"I have pledged myself, most lovely lady, to Mr. Marchmont himself, to cancel the whole of this debt *forever*, if you will but grant me *one kiss* on those fair cheeks of yours."

The villain advanced towards Mrs. M., intending to accomplish his purpose, when Hester sprang to her feet, and flew to the bell, giving it reiterated and violent jerks, which alarmed the servants, and her own maid rushed in, screaming—

"Mercy, ma'am, what's the matter?"

Mrs. Marchmont, with her eyes dilated, her cheeks pallid with anger, and her voice so choked that she could scarcely find utterance, pointed to S—, saying,—

"Show that villain out,—he has insulted me."

The faithful defender of her mistress, who had

often courageously interfered when Mr. Marchmont had abused his wife, ran up to S——, and giving him a slap on the mouth with her huge, strong hand, seized him by the collar and pushed him through the hall out at the front door, locking it after the stunned and frightened wretch. He went his way, swearing immediate vengeance.

Like some frightful dream did this work of a few moments seem to the bewildered wife, and under its influence she sank into a swoon. Her faithful Martha watched and nursed her for several hours, interspersing with her attentions ejaculations of sympathy, though the nature of the outrage the intruder had committed had not been explained to her; it was sufficient to know that her "dear, good mistress" had been offended.

"Poor lady! it's too bad, it is, the way she has to be plagued. If I was you, ma'am, I wouldn't stand it, no how.—Deary me! these troubles 'll be the death o' ye some day.—The good-for-nothin' dog! to come here and scare ye so."

When Mrs. Marchmont, after a season, was enabled to rally her powers, she sought her favorite retreat from the world and its troubles, and alone with God, she laid the matter before Him, asking for wisdom and strength to bear her through all she might still be called to endure. She saw as in a dismal perspective the results of her late proceedings, and could, in

a wordly view, hope for nothing, unless, indeed, God should open a way to avert the calamity ; and many were the sad communings she held with her own heart.

After a few days, Marchmont made his appearance, brazen with wine. Unwilling to believe that he really could have sent the vile S——, on the errand he had performed, Hester informed her husband of the insult which had been offered to her

“ Well, what of that ? ” was his shameless reply ; “ it wouldn’t have hurt you any, and you might have been glad to have got off that way.—Your d——d foolishness will ruin us.”

What earthly resort had this stricken woman, when her own husband was her worst enemy ? Reproaches would have added fuel to the flame, and tears excited only anger and abuse. What a blessing then was her hope in Christ Jesus, and her faith in the promises of Revelation !

It was not long before an officer, commissioned by S——, entered the residence of Mrs. Marchmont, to take an inventory of goods, jewels, plate, &c. To redeem the note, every thing of value in the house was sacrificed, with the exception of Hester’s watch, which having been a wedding gift from her god-mother, she insisted upon retaining. She had, in other days, been very proud of her ornaments and plate, and it was not without many a heavy sigh that

she saw them sacrificed on the altar of gaming. Had it been to satisfy just and honest claims, or to secure some necessary good, the trial would not have seemed so great. And here, again, PRAYER was her resort, and as usual, it brought deliverance. To whom could she go but unto Jesus?—earth held not one who could interpose in matters like these. She was led to the belief, that He who had enabled her to leave a church, which fostered all the vain pomp and glory of the work, had taken this method of showing her what vain baubles, in His sight, were the gold and gems of earth. The struggle resulted in entire resignation to any events which God should ordain to occur in her future life; were but His promise fulfilled towards her,—“I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

“Ah!” said she, many months afterward, when speaking of the circumstance to a Christian friend, “they went out from me *forever*—and I trust satan went with them.”

There were moments, intervals in which the effects of dissipation would somewhat subside, when Herbert Marchmont would awake to a sense of the ruin he was bringing upon himself and his family. The vividness of such views, instead of leading him to repentance, produced paroxysms of the most unbounded anger, and insane demonstrations of the bitterness that writhed his soul. He was a terror to

all around him, but delighted more especially in directing the missiles of his wrath towards his innocent companion, saying—

“It is all your fault, because you were such a d——d fool you wouldn’t go with me into society.”

In conformity with this wretched excuse, he had long before taken a female companion, upon whom he had lavished immense sums; keeping her in a splendid apartment, and taking her to the theatre, opera, and all other places where she could find admittance. Especially to provoke his wife, and blind the eyes of some of her friends, he had ordered Mrs. Marchmont’s own milliner and dress-maker to prepare this woman’s clothing of the same material, and in the same style as that of his wife, with a view of deceiving those who should meet him in his rides and promenades, with the impression that he was attending Mrs. Marchmont. It had been only by the allusions of her friends to these supposed attentions, that Hester had learned this greatest of wrongs, for which there was, as she was situated, no possible redress.

In the fits of anger, to which this wretched man was subject, he would summon his wife from the care of her children, or from her bed at night, to prepare feasts for his sole use, and then wantonly throw the whole out of the window, and saying he would “go where they had things fit to eat,” compel her, by main

force, to accompany him at the hour of midnight, to some coffee-house. There he would behave so rudely, that the landlord would expel him from the door, with oaths, and they were only prevented from being placed in the lock-up, by being personally known to some one of the police, who from respect to Mrs. Marchmont would attend them to their home. In affairs like these, his compulsion of Mrs. Marchmont was always attended with severe blows, and forcible dragging her from the house, and not one of the servants dared to interfere. The knowledge that his *health* was rapidly giving way, under the influence of his vicious habits, was an exciting cause of increasing his irritability. With a martyr spirit, Hester Marchmont bore all these sufferings, hourly praying and longing for God to turn the sinner's heart—hourly believing against hope, that her prayers would yet be answered.

Mr. Marchmont's health in time became so broken, that his physicians declared no power could save him, unless he should leave London and its exciting scenes of dissipation. A legacy of some thousand pounds had recently been paid over to Mr. Marchmont, and those who were really his friends, advised him to seek the restoration of his health, and then to enter some line of business, with a view of retrieving his lost fortune. These causes combined, induced Marchmont to follow the advice of his physicians, and

retire into the country for a time. Of course his family were compelled to accompany him. They concluded to visit some friends residing in Chiswell, whose mansion was very near the famed forest in which Charles hid himself in an oak from those who pursued him. The village was one of those peculiarly pleasant, home-like places, of which the English are justly so proud. The scenery, too, was delightful, and for minds at peace, nature's fountains here afforded ample draughts of happiness. But "a wounded spirit, who can bear?" And Mr. Marchmont's disease rapidly advanced, bringing with it a racking cough, from which he could gain no relief. Melancholy now took the place of irritation and anger, and at times his spirits sank to the lowest ebb. His friends spared no pains nor expense to render the visit pleasant; and parties, excursions, and other schemes of amusement were constantly planned. But it was only while amid such scenes that Marchmont seemed to endure life.

Hester was frequently compelled to attend these excursions and visits, and endeavored to enjoy, as well as she was able all that was really innocent connected with them. But there were occasions, when she was called upon to exercise a Christian decision of conduct, which caused her to be looked upon, by the friends of Mr. Marchmont, as a very singular woman. His apparent politeness to her, and even

kindness, assumed while in their presence, led them to blame Mrs. Marchmont for much of the unhappiness which seemed to induce his unusual gloominess, thus adding another drop to her cup of bitterness already full, especially, as while in secret, he continued the old system of abuse. But never were her duties left unperformed, and upon the means of grace which the place afforded, she attended at every favorable opportunity. Each day bore witness to her prayers and tears ; her wrestling in agony of supplication for the day of deliverance to draw nigh. But Chiswell and its lovely scenes, and its artificial pleasures, failed to retrieve either body or mind, and the restless spirit of Herbert Marchmont urged his return to London. Hester would have preferred residing in this quiet retreat, but, as usual, the husband ruled all proceedings, and the wife obeyed ; endeavoring to say from her heart, " Lord ! not my will, but Thine."

CHAPTER XV.

A SINNER CONVICTED.

THE whole Christian world has learned the name of AMOS SUTTON, the name of one who has joined the ransomed ones around the throne of God. Many in heathen lands bless that name, many too, in lands called Christian, how many, eternity only can reveal. But of him truly may it be said, "The memory of the just is blessed."

From Orissa, the scene of long years' toiling in faith and patience, the missionary, with his meek, enduring wife, landed upon the shores of his native England. The Christian world had urged him to return to them and to his home, and with his own lips declare what he had witnessed and heard of the abominations and woes of idolatry. He had obeyed the call, and Exeter Hall was thronged with the thousands who gathered to listen to the missionary of the cross. Breathless with attention they hung upon his words while he presented the claims of the

heathen world, and raised to their view the hideous idols of wood and stone, as samples of those to which perishing millions daily bowed down as to gods who could save them from sin and misery. Then came the droppings of the silver and gold into the Lord's treasury ; then went up earnest prayers and joyful hymns, and warm English hearts folded the missionary and his wife in embraces of affection and prayer. The city was alive with excitement, and Christians and unbelievers alike flocked in crowds to hear a man who described heathenism and its horrors, on one hand, and upon the other, the *far worse* condition of the impenitent in gospel lands.

Using all the eloquence of which she was capable, Mrs. Marchmont allowed no opportunity to pass, in which she could urge upon her husband to go *just once* to hear the missionary whose earnestness had already caused many sinners to quake for fear of a judgment to come. Joy trembled in her whole frame, as Marchmont one evening very ungraciously declared, he "believed he'd go with her this time, as he didn't know what else to do with himself. He supposed he might as well go just to see the queer images set up for show." The happy wife assumes indifference and calmness in her face, but who can tell how loaded is every breath she draws with prayers for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to go with them. What if he does grip her arm so tightly

while pretending to assist her over a gutter, as to draw the blood through the tender skin, and then as she utters a faint cry, he says audibly—

“ Oh, you have that terrible pain again, my dear !”

She hopes there will be a day when an end will come to all this, and he will see himself as he is. What if he gallantly escorts her into a pew, and then in pretence of placing a rest under her feet, nearly crushes them in his grip, while she turns pale with the pain ? She looks to a Helper who is nigh though unseen. Gradually her persecutor is becoming interested in the crowds who surround him, and the praying wife is left to her own meditations. Just before her sits one of the good sisters of her own church, who wonders that the man of fashion has found his way into an assembly he is known to despise. She leans over and whispers to Mrs. Marchmont—

“ I am so glad to see your husband here. I suppose it is him.”

“ Yes, sister, it is he, indeed.”

“ What an elegant looking gentleman he is ; what a pity he is not a Christian !”

“ Well, pray for him, sister, to-night especially, that he may be converted !”

“ I will indeed, that I will,” said the good woman, pressing her hand with affection—and Hester and the matron each bowed their heads in silence.

The missionary rose, and with uplifted hands called upon the audience to seek God's blessing. Did Marchmont ever hear the voice of prayer, *real, earnest* prayer? Yes, he had sometimes heard the low, suppressed tones of his persecuted wife, and knew she was pleading at a throne of mercy. And he has heard his little daughter, in her childlike accents, asking, "Please, Jesus, give my pa a new heart," and her little voice has left an echo in his heart which he has silenced in the roars of the card-room. But *this* prayer is so strange to him. Does that pale, yet sunburnt missionary, with his aspect of calm, meek dignity, and his earnest eye and tongue, believe really that he is addressing a being who hears him? Most assuredly he does. There is reality in his tones, reality in his uplifted face, reality in the words he utters. He bears a sinning, dying world upon his heart, and is pleading with the great Intercessor in their behalf. And he speaks as friend speaketh to friend, in confidence that he will not be denied. Marchmont listens in wonder, and a strange feeling—is it *awe*?—pervades his mind—he has forgotten to scoff, he has forgotten his wife.

Hark—the missionary has read a hymn, but Marchmont hardly knows what has passed, and now the voices of the thousands around him are rising and swelling in a hymn to the Saviour of men. It is strange, though he has heard something like it when

he has dropped in at the "Dipper's." But all around him now join in this song of praise, and if he could, he would be tempted to put his fingers into his ears.

And now all is breathless silence. The missionary opens the book and reads off, "The idols which see not, neither can they hear," &c. Then looking around upon the sea of human faces before him, he selects these memorable words—

"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

The subject so sublimely pathetic, is treated as one like AMOS SUTTON knows how to exhibit its truths, for he has himself been taught of a Teacher divine. It is alike adapted to the martyr-wife and the persecuting husband, and each feels every sentence as it comes thrilling upon their ears, attended with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then and there sped an arrow into the heart of Herbert Marchmont. He felt its keenness, but not even to himself would he acknowledge he was wounded. Nay, he scarcely knew the nature of this new sensation. But the watchful wife saw with a joy she could scarcely contain, the unmistakable signs of conviction of sin, resisted though they were. Never had Marchmont been an infidel, but his superlative love of self had led him to hate every thing

which interfered with his own depraved will and tastes.

And now the vast throng rise to their feet. From a little card he holds in his hand, the missionary *lines* a hymn, which is the emanation of his own earnest spirit. "Auld Lang Syne" floats in its pensive melody through the building, but the words are such as Marchmont cannot sing, much less can he join in the *chorus* of each verse—

"It is the hope, the blessed hope,
Which Jesus' grace has given,—
The hope when days and years are fled
We all shall meet in Heaven—
We all shall meet in Heaven, my friends,
We all shall meet in Heaven, &c."

Herbert Marchmont leaves Exeter Hall, with the crowd, giving his wife his arm—he has forgotten this time to grip her hand, and the husband and wife return to their home in silence, for he has not spoken, and she is unwilling to interfere with the workings of his conscience.

The pride of the convicted sinner renders him unwilling to disclose his feelings to her whom he has so often abused. The retribution of Eternity stares him in the face, and remorse holds up to his view the appalling catalogue of crimes against God and man, which extends far back into the history of his youth. Distressed, alarmed, angry, yet rebellious

still, he is a torment to himself and his hopeful, praying wife. She speaks kindly to him, sometimes ventures to read a few words in the Bible ; but he snatches it from her and flings it into the fire, from which she rescues it unharmed. She goes to her closet, but he drives her from it with cruel abuse. Oh ! wretched man, these are the foamings and ravings of that evil spirit thou hast cherished so long—loath to take its departure from its familiar home. But hope has dawned in the heart of Hester Marchmont, though the morning is shrouded in clouds, and she waits God's time for the rising of the "Son of Righteousness with healing in His wings."

In her intense anxiety for the salvation of her husband, Hester invited a brother of the good missionary to call at her residence, for the purpose of seeking an opportunity for conversation with Mr. Marchmont. The missionary's own time was so constantly preoccupied, that an attempt to procure an interview would have been unavailing ; but his brother was well qualified by disposition and piety, to counsel those who are in trouble of mind. He called, and was introduced to Mr. Marchmont, but a cold, formal politeness was all the encouragement he received, and the proud sinner entrenched himself behind the barriers of an impenetrable silence. When the minister departed, Mr. Marchmont vented his displeasure upon his wife, and she began to fear that every avenue to his heart was closed.

During this state of affairs, Marchmont continued his habits of drinking and gaming, though in a diminished degree, seeking by these means to drown the outcries of the awakened monitor within him. But in the midst of all this, he was one day borne into the presence of his wife, with one arm broken, and a shoulder dislocated, the consequences of a fall while in a state of intoxication. The attending surgeon pronounced many of his injuries internal, and such as would affect him through life, though he would probably be able to go about, after several weeks of quiet. The results proved his opinion correct. But rigid abstinence from all stimulating food and drinks, confinement in one position, and a great amount of pain and suffering, rendered Marchmont intolerably peevish and irritable. The task of nursing devolved solely on Mrs. Marchmont, who was all this time herself in health unusually delicate. With all this, and her little ones to care for, and her household to manage, she must have been more than human if she had not sometimes felt her faith and patience fail, especially when to the fatigue and responsibility of nursing her husband, was added all the abuse of which, in his situation, he was capable—throwing all the blame of his sufferings upon her and his physician. But her cry of “Lord, save, or I perish,” was never heard in vain ; and grace was still supplied to the weakness of the flesh, and the tempted and tried

t. Who shall say that the God of the Bible is the God of truth—that he does not always give those who ask ?

ing, wearisome weeks went on their round, ing to eternity the same sad tale of the Spirit ved, and the wife troubled. The invalid left his and his dwelling to walk abroad in the warm ight, and the free air of the God of life ; but no of thanksgiving went up from his rebellious t. He sought again those enemies of his soul, card-table and the wine bottle, and the flames aroused within him, prostrated him again upon ouch, to suffer yet more intensely. Now, he l not but feel, however unwillingly, the world ding from his grasp, and the voice of conscience d him to repent, but his *heart*, how it turned r from the light ! But a Hand was now upon him, se pressure he could not resist—a power was ng upon all that was his, whose influence he l not withstand. Then the moral ear began ly to listen, and the eye to turn its glance inward the desolation of heart, and upward, too, but broad blaze of infinite justice caused it to shrink rward, appalled.

it she who was commissioned to be as a guardian l to this wandering spirit, watched the first ns of relenting, and lifting her heart to the Un- for strength, she ventured one day to approach

her husband with the word of God in her hand, saying—

“ May I read a little to you, my dear ? you will feel better, perhaps, to have something to listen to.”

“ Well, read, if you want to, I don’t care.”

With this ungracious permission the spirit of hope was delighted, and the loving wife seated herself by the couch of her husband, to read in her gentlest tones the messages of Divine Love. She deemed it wisdom to be brief in her readings just then, and very soon left the room to pour out her gratitude and her hopes. That evening, though trembling as she did so, she called her little ones to a corner of his room, and kneeling with them, as usual, assisted their evening devotions. Mr. Marchmont did not deign to notice them, but when their sweet “ good night, pa,” was lisped into his ear, he responded to it in kinder tones than usual. There was hope in one heart that night, for the lion was seemingly soothed by the voice of the lamb—and into another the light of reason and truth shed some of its holiest beams.

Once more was the strong man to arise, and for a time, go forth under the blue canopy of heaven. On the first bright Lord’s day after he had become able to walk abroad, his wife gave him a most winning invitation to accompany her to church.

“ Well, Wide-awake, I’ll go for once, and hear what you dippers have to say. But mind, they’ll not pro-

selyte *me* as they have *you*; I hope *I* never shall be such a fool as to disgrace myself in that way."

"I do not wish you to believe until you can do it with *all your heart*," was Mrs. Marchmont's reply.

Those who had seen Mr. Marchmont pale from illness, yet not greatly emaciated, with his air of gentle, manly address, ushering his wife into her seat in the church, placing a footstool for her feet, and presenting her the hymn-book with an expression of tenderness in his manner, would have repulsed the bare suggestion that he was aught else than a husband should be. Much less, that on his return, angry at the truths he had heard, without being able to deny, and bearing within himself a sentence of condemnation, he would assail her ears with the grossest remarks on the manner of worship observed by the Baptists, and torment her by his revilings, until in tears she fled into her closet sanctuary. Where could she find relief from such inquisitorial tortures as had been her portion, during most of her married life, excepting in the study of Revelation and acts of devotion?

Let it be borne in mind, that Hester Marchmont possessed by nature a proud, high-toned, independent spirit, which could never bow to any other authority than that of her mother, her husband, and her church. She was no lack-a-daisical, weak-minded woman, in-

capable of understanding her rights, or feeling her wrongs; but one, whose every nerve thrilled keenly to the emotions of love, of joy, or of sorrow, and whose intellect could appreciate the loftiest aspirations of mind. And her husband was one of those, who have been styled "nature's noblemen," and whom, in the days of her early espousals, she was proud to call *my* husband—*my* Herbert. Education and wealth, as well as nature and rank, had done their best for Herbert Marchmont, yet his native good sense, good humor, and strength of intellect, were all perverted by vice. His first passionate love for his wife had been turned into hatred by his united bigotry and pride. These were the governing motives of all his cruelty. "That *his wife* should leave the Church of England, that pillar of national glory, to unite herself with a few obscure and ignorant fanatics, whom nobody knew, was too bad to be borne." And so the mistaken man, himself ignorant of what he should have known, with cruel lashings, vented his false pride upon his innocent wife, permitting no mitigations, allowing no hope; and, even now, while the spirit of conviction was laboring to humble this unholy scorn, he gave vent to it in full force upon his unresisting victim.

But what is there on earth which Faith, Hope and Charity cannot achieve, and cannot bear? Ask the long line of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and mar-

tyrs, and the thousands of meek and unrecorded men and women, who have gone to wear the white and blood-washed robes, and the crowns of victory! Ask the history of the Crucified! And looking back to all these, and upward with her tear-dimmed eye, the persecuted wife returns from her retreat to make another effort to win over the enemy of her peace.

“If you will but condescend to read that Book which *you* acknowledge is the Word of God—if you will but commence the Gospels, and read them through with me, and then can find that I have done anything they have not required of me, I will submit to your anger without a murmur.”

This was a bold challenge, and several times repeated before it was accepted, and then, most evidently, in a spirit of defiance.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROGRESS OF TRUTH.—RECONCILIATIONS.

It was only in Mr. Marchmont's softest and most gracious moods, that his wife attempted to hold him to his agreement, and of course these did not occur every day. While reading, he often interrupted with arguments, doubts and cavils, but in patience and calmness of manner she endeavored to keep his mind fixed upon the one great truth, "EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD." And at other times, she especially directed his attention to those passages which had first arrested her own attention, in the lonely vigils of the past, and had led her to make that decision which had caused her so many days and nights of suffering.—Especially those memorable words, "He that BELIEVETH and is *baptized*, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Then, again, she begged him to consider the right interpretation and import of the word *baptize*. She told him of her own anxious search after the true meaning of the word, and the result of

her inquiries in each instance. Mr. Marchmont, at last, seemed as one awaking from a dream, and as his wife continued her revelations day by day, he gazed at her as if she were bringing intelligence from another sphere. He made no concessions nor acknowledgments to her, but his taunts were less frequently thrown out; he became more patient, and on some occasions, there was in his manner an approach to something like tenderness. Could Hester see all this and not be grateful to God! would not praise for the present be mingled with desires and hopes for the future! And Lizzie, her mother's gentle comforter, kneeling by her side, joined in her petitions—

“Please Jesus, make my father a good man. O Lord, *do please* give my father a new heart.”

The desertion of her mother and her family had been the twin-trial to the cruelty of her husband. She thought, had her friends stood by her, she could have endured it with greater fortitude. But it had pleased her heavenly Father in His wisdom, to withdraw these earthly friendships, that she “might seek her all in Him,” and find how fully *HE alone* can sustain the trusting soul. “Ah! they do not know what it is to have none but Jesus to go to,” was Hester's remark, some years afterwards, when the trials of some individuals were made their excuse for backsliding. “None but Jesus to go to, would show them that *He* is worth a world of friends.”

Mr. Marchmont had in some degree, recovered from his last attack sufficiently to leave his room, and occasionally ride out. Hester had on one day of his absence, been reflecting upon the sad state of affairs between her mother, her sisters and herself, and on the numerous overtures she had made for a reconciliation, especially to her mother, and how heartlessly they had been rejected. While she was thus sadly engaged, a messenger arrived, bringing a request from Mrs. Warwick, that Hester would immediately visit her. Alarmed, she inquired if her mother was ill. The messenger replied, "seriously so." Mrs. Warwick had been troubled for some time with symptoms of apoplexy, and had that morning been walking in her garden, where she had fallen, and was conveyed to her house in an apparently lifeless condition. Her physician being immediately summoned, she was in a few hours restored to consciousness, but her injuries were pronounced to be of an internal and fatal character. Supposing herself to be dying, the image of her discarded and suffering daughter presented itself suddenly to her view. Her other children stood around her bed, but Hester—she was not there. Conscience struggled with pride, and the long smothered maternal love revived in all its strength.

"Send immediately for Hester," said the apparently dying mother, speaking with a strength which

surprised all in the room. "I must see her quick, before it is too late."

It needed no urging to hasten Mrs. Marchmont to the side of the mother still fondly loved, and as quickly as fleet horses could move, Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont were on their way to the residence of Mrs. Warwick. Hester heeded no one's presence, but with outstretched arms flew to her mother's bed, where, sobbing convulsively, she was held in the embrace of early years.

"Mother, oh! mother, say that you forgive me; say that you love me once more."

"Forgive you, yes! child, and I have loved you all along,—it is you who must forgive your cruel mother."

"Give me your blessing now, mother, I cannot live without it."

"God bless you forever, my child—and bless the dear children too."

"Mother, you are killing yourself," said one of her other daughters; "you know that Doctor—— said you must be kept very quiet."

"But I am better now—I shall not die, at least, not now; and, children, forgive your poor sister, and forget all she has done."

Mrs. Marchmont's sisters gave her their hands, but evidently with reluctance and coldness; yet the

warm heart of Hester was thankful even for so much gained.

Mrs. Warwick grew gradually better from the hour of her reconciliation with her daughter, and finally, recovered her usual health. The intercourse of former days was opened between all members of the different families, but though Mrs. Warwick seldom alluded to Hester's religious views, the sisters still took delight in taunting her with "the disgrace she had brought upon herself and them." But Hester bore all patiently, thankful for the mercies yet left to her lot.

In former days, when Mrs. Marchmont's sisters had been accustomed to ridicule and asperse her in the presence of her husband, Mr. Marchmont had always joined in the attacks, and assisted them, saying still more cruel words than they. About this time they renewed their attacks in his presence, when he, stopping before them as he paced the room, replied in a very prompt manner, "Let Wide-awake alone, she did no more than her Bible told her to, *at least, she thought so.*" How the heart of the long-tried wife leaped for joy, as she heard this first acknowledgment of her rights as a woman and a Christian! The day was breaking, even if it dawned in sombre and heavy clouds.

Mr. Marchmont continued an invalid, and his physicians prescribed constant traveling, which advice

he was compelled to follow, as no system or regimen he observed while in the city, afforded more than a temporary relief. In his feeble condition he could not travel alone, and his faithful wife made her arrangements to accompany him. Hester's desires for her husband's conversion increased as she saw him slowly but surely descending into the grave without repentance and without hope. She felt that he *must* be saved, and she wrestled and agonized each day for the boon of his redemption.

Mrs. Marchmont never neglected morning and evening worship with her children, and now she frequently performed it in the presence of her husband. He had always heard the service *read*, but Mrs. Marchmont thought she could best express her own desires in her own words. She had taught her children to do the same; and Lizzie, in her innocence, one night, forgetting the presence of her father, uttered the following petition—"Our Father in heaven, I pray—my mother says I must love my poor father and pray for him—please change him, make him good and us happy; forgive us all; me wrong, make me good, *good* for Jesus' sake, amen." As the child mentioned her father, he started and seemed struggling with emotion. The Holy Spirit can employ even the influence of a child to rouse the callous heart to a sense of its condition, but the father did not disclose his feelings on this occasion—his countenance and movements alone told the tale.

After several months' wanderings in search of health, the season for returning came, but the improvement in Mr. Marchmont was not so great as had been expected. His naturally fine constitution was paying the forfeit of a life spent in vice and dissipation, and the fountains of youth and health could not be renewed.

"Oh, dear!" said he to his wife, as on one occasion he felt more than usually exhausted, "'tis a hard lot for one so young as I to be thus robbed of health and happiness."

Mrs. Marchmont never administered *false* comfort to any one, and therefore replied with Christian sincerity—

"I think you should rather be thankful to God's mercy that you are not confined entirely to your bed, for He gave you health, strength and beauty, and you have abused them all in a manner which might justly have cost you your life."

"It is all the doctors' fault," said he, surlily, "they get their pay for nothing."

"Doctors, my dear, cannot always make whole that which is broken, neither can they give health when nature's laws have so long been violated."

"I say you lie. I have only lived as a gentleman ought to live who wants to enjoy life."

"Poor fellow! your enjoyment in this world is near to its end, and without repentance, at an end

hereafter," and with a deep sigh Hester left the room, lest his anger should become roused still higher.

Several days after, Mrs. Marchmont was sewing in her husband's room, while he reclined on the sofa near by, when he addressed her in a tone of apparent kindness—

"Wid'-awake, what do you think you would do if I should die—will you wear mourning for me?"

"Certainly," was the reply.

"Yes, yes, I thought you would want to let people know you were single—but, remember, you have a string of young ones, and men don't want other's children."

"Well, well, don't talk so—if you die, and don't wish me to wear mourning, I can do as you desire."

"Oh, I thought I would try you. I did not suppose you loved me. I have treated you very badly, I own, but I could not help straying—you know my disposition."

At another time he inquired, "Do you ever pray to God to take me out of the way? I am sure I am no use to any one, and my money is almost gone, and we shall have to sell our property."

"Do not trouble yourself about that. You know while my mother lives I shall have an every-day fortune."

"Ah, but she does not know *all*—if she did!"

"Say no more. Have you forgotten our marriage

vows? I have tried to remember and keep them through all, and I shall not now be likely to disregard them."

"Very good, Wide-awake, but you know *I* have broken them."

"That is your own fault—if you thought well to put your hand in the fire and get burnt, it was not my wish to do likewise."

"Oh, you were the wisest after all."

Such were some of the exhibitions of awakened remorse, unaccompanied by true repentance and humiliation. It required a skilful blending of wisdom and simplicity to deal with a mind thus exercised, to avoid touching the wrong key and calling forth the war tones of rebellion.

Mrs. Marchmont was, one Sabbath morning, preparing to attend public worship, when she noticed her husband regarding her with more than usual attention. He was considerably better, and had walked some distance the day before, so she ventured to inquire, if he would not accompany her to church.

"No, indeed," said the unhappy man, "that is no place for *me*."

"But it is to such as *you* the Gospel is sent."

"How do you know that,—what do *you* know of the Gospel?"

"I *feel* its power, and, therefore, I know it; if you

ill go, you may, perhaps, feel too that the Gospel is good."

Hester left him, and took her course, as usual, leisurely through the chief streets, but when she arrived at the chapel door, lo ! Marchmont joined her. He had mischievously wound through the near alleys to give his wife a surprise, and seemed to enjoy it greatly, attending her into the pew, and seating himself, as he had done once before. He seemed interested in the services, and several times a shade of emotion passed over his face, causing hope to spring up in the heart of his wife. "What a husband you have," was the remark of a friend, as they were passing out, "he merely wants but the one thing needful." So fallacious is the outward appearance, and so skilfully is the heart deceived.

Months rolled on, Herbert Marchmont sometimes gaining in health, at others, so prostrated that life seemed rapidly receding. Yet, at no time could he be induced to converse with the Christian friends of Mrs. Marchmont. Again watering places were visited, and remedies applied, but what was gained at home, was lost abroad, for the snares of his associates were spread around him, and he seemed powerless to resist. Winter came, and its chilling influences added much to the strength of his sufferings ; oppressed in his breathing, and wearied with nights of relentless coughing ; his condition was clouded by

sorrow, and hopeless through sin. Pecuniary matters were becoming more straitened also, so that Mrs. Marchmont felt herself obliged to discharge two of her servants, retaining but her own maid and coachman. Upon her devolved the duty of nursing her invalid husband, training her infant children, superintending her household, and performing the engagements she had entered into with church associations. Whether, in her circumstances, it was her duty to attend to these latter, became a question of weight, and a subject of prayer. She one day remarked to her husband, that she "must relinquish visiting the poor as perhaps he needed attentions while she was absent, the servant could not give." He replied—

"You need not do that.—I have abused you too much ever to expect any attention from you, and if you neglected me entirely, I could not blame you."

"But I will *not* neglect you, and I will arrange every thing for your comfort, and give Martha directions, and then, if you will not think hardly of me, I will slip out a little while, and look at my poor families."

With this, Mr. Marchmont seemed pleased, and Hester resorting to the Fountain of Life, drew fresh supplies of strength, and went forth with quickened steps, on her errands of mercy.

She bore these poor creatures very near her heart, and having, one day, encountered more than usual

suffering, she remembered them that night in family devotions, with many tears. After the season of worship was over, Mr. Marchmont inquired—

“Why do you feel so much for the troubles of others—haven’t you enough of your own?”

“Being conversant with trouble myself, renders me more sensible of the woes of others.—It is love to Jesus which prompts me to try to serve the afflicted.”

“But you are always going about, and giving away what you may one day want yourself.”

“Oh, no, Herbert; for what we give to the poor *willingly*, we ‘lend to the Lord,’ and he has promised to ‘repay us again.’”

The course of daily scripture readings being continued, had reached that portion of Isaiah containing the memorable passage,—“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” &c. At the verse, “.forsaking of sins,” &c., Mrs. Marchmont read slowly, and with much emphasis, that her husband’s attention might be concentrated upon its great importance.

“Why!” remarked he, “*scarlet*, and *blood*,—they are pretty black—I never killed any one—but I have done bad enough. Perhaps, I may be forgiven.”

“Yes, Herbert, listen,—‘There is forgiveness *with Thee*, that Thou mayest be feared.’”

"Where have you learned so much Methodism, Wide-awake?"

"I am not a Methodist, my husband, you mistake, but a Spirit-taught *Baptist*, for you know I knew nothing until the Gospel taught me."

These were among the daily efforts made, in various ways, to bring the truth to bear upon a heart deadened by pride and the love of the world. Seeing the feeble frame grow still more frail as each week advanced, the devoted wife became earnest in her entreaties that her husband should read for *himself* the Gospels of the Son of God, which point she finally gained. And many times seeing him take up the Bible and recline upon the sofa to read, did she retire to ask a blessing on the perusal. Her earnestness was understood by the angel-child, who shared all her labors of love, and seeing her mother one day retire, she followed and knelt by her side, saying—

"Let *me* help you pray for poor father, ma."

"My dear, how do you know it is for your *father* I wish to pray?"

"Because you cry so, ma."

The next day her father drew her between his knees, and the prattler revealed the secret.

"I say my prayer for you, father, and mother did too, and mother cry too, pa."

Mr. Marchmont turned to his wife, saying—

"Tell me why you think you ought to pray for me ; do you think I can't pray for myself if I want to ?"

"It is love for you, for your undying soul, which prompts my prayers, and I *did* ask that the reading of the Word might be blessed to your salvation."

Mrs. Marchmont thought it prudent to avoid further questions, and left him with the little girl while she performed some household duties.

Disease again brought Herbert Marchmont low, and now his heart was so far humbled as to crave the ministry of prayer and the teachings of God's Word. Daily did Mrs. Marchmont sit by the bed of her suffering husband, reading from the Bible such selections as seemed best adapted to his state, sometimes pleading for the visits of the Spirit, at others making acknowledgments of sin in behalf of her guilty but repentant companion, still wresting and struggling in the toils of unbelief. Willingly now Herbert Marchmont consented to receive the visits of some who had been the helpers of his wife in her Christian pilgrimage, and humbly he listened to their counsel, though still in a degree reserved concerning the real depths of his anxiety to be saved. But the man who had first shown him, while describing the meekness of the Crucified, the sinfulness of his past life, was far away on the broad ocean, and

nearing the coast of the new world he was about to visit. Little knew the good missionary and his wife, how that praying man and woman blessed the name of SUTTON—how they longed for his presence in that chamber of sickness. But perhaps that history has ere this been revealed to the sainted missionary, for he has laid down his armor and gone to receive his crown. Herbert Marchmont, too, has long since made one in his crown of rejoicing.

But again was the vigor of a naturally fine constitution partially triumphant for a time : and the restlessness of a mind diseased revealed itself still more with the renewed strength of the frame it inhabited. But the brand was to be plucked from the burning, the power of cleansing and saving grace to be felt and acknowledged.

The prostration of that soul, when overcome by the view of his exceeding guilt in the sight of God—his astonishment when permitted to perceive the great plan of salvation by Christ—and the meltings of that icy heart in the warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness, cannot be described. The work of the Holy Spirit often surpasses the sublimest conceptions of thought, how much more the power of language. That one solemn moment when the new birth is ushered in, when the soul falls with its load of guilt and misery at the feet of the Infinite com-

passion, and yields itself unconditionally to Him “who purchased it with His own blood—the burst of joy and gratitude—the calm of peace—can be described in appropriate language *only* in that realm where the body shall not limit the mind. .

CHAPTER XVII.

BELIEF—BAPTISM—TEMPTATION.

THE lion turned into a lamb, the persecutor into an humble recipient of the doctrines he had hated, still human nature lingered with its infirmities, its doubts and fears ; and unwilling his wife should know all his weakness, Mr. Marchmont privately sought the counsel of the Rev. J. Stephenson, his wife's beloved pastor. With this good man he had many conversations, of which Mrs. Marchmont had no knowledge, and much time was spent in reading the Bible and prayer, when no eye but that of God was upon him. After many weeks trembling and hesitation, a church meeting was appointed, and Mr. Marchmont invited to attend. Of this he said nothing to his wife, and when afterwards asked the reason, he replied—

“He had so often deceived and so cruelly abused her, he did not think it probable she would believe him, but would imagine he was only tantalizing her with vain hopes.”

The hour for church meeting arrived. Mrs. March-

mont arranged her affairs at home, and enjoying much of that gratitude and peace she had experienced since she believed her husband renewed in heart, took her place in the assembly of the beloved in Zion. She had left Mr. Marchmont reclining on the sofa, with his Bible by his side. Who can describe her surprise when she saw him enter that place but half an hour later than herself! The services commenced, and after the singing of a hymn and prayer, a few minutes elapsed, when her already palpitating heart throbbed more violently as she heard her husband called by name, and saw him rise and come forth to "declare what the Lord had done for his soul."—Humbly he spoke, and oh! what sentences of true and heartfelt repentance fell from his lips, as he recounted the history of the past, the struggles and rebellion of his soul—the anxious efforts of his forgiving wife—his earnest search into the Word to learn why she had chosen the Baptist faith—the gradual dawning of light into his mind, and his penitent offering of himself to Christ and to his church.

Ah! this intense reaction of soul, from the depths of sorrow to the heights of joy, how nearly did it overcome the frame of the wife who sat sobbing almost convulsively, and unable to look about her when those around had heard her husband's story of a love and faith which had been to him almost salvation. *An evening to be remembered forever was that,*

when not a dry eye could be seen in all that company of disciples, from the pastor and the grey-headed deacons to the youngest member of the flock. And did not angels also listen upon that evening, and did not their harps tune forth new strains of joy? "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth."

Oh! how the love which had been pledged to Herbert Marchmont at the marriage altar, now flowed from its long pent-up fountains, to pour its gushing tide at his feet; bearing into oblivion the memory of past wrongs—while he, knowing as yet, so little of the pure depths of woman's love, declared, "nature is nature,—how *can* my wife ever forgive me?—and yet, I think I know *something* of her forgiving spirit, even now."

Penitently and humbly, yet with hope in the Son of God, was Herbert Marchmont led into the baptismal waters, by the same hand which had once conducted thither his happy, believing wife. The scene was not, as then, one of triumphant joy; he who took upon him the vows of baptism, felt that he had come, as it were, at the eleventh hour into the Master's field; that his offering was a withered heart, and a frail body. But the finger of faith pointed to Him, who is made for sinners Righteousness, Justification, and Redemption; and wrapping around him *the offered robe*, he gave himself to Christ, *just as he was,*

How brightly, now, rose upon Mrs. Marchmont's mental view, the sweet visions of hope! "The future would be to her a foretaste of heaven. If her husband's health should be restored, and he should walk worthy of the name he had professed—surely earth would be all sunlight." Such were some of the whisperings of her heart from the time she saw her once persecuting partner baptized "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." But "the trial of her faith was not yet perfect," for she was yet to feel the "thorn in the flesh." The Prince of Darkness could not relinquish one who had been his faithful servant for so many years, without many fierce contentions for victory. And so, finding his prey had at last escaped, he let loose upon him all the artillery of remorse, unbelief, and almost despair. *Why* this was permitted must not be asked—but surely, those who spend so many years in rebellion against God, and who sin with such a high hand, lay up for themselves, even in case of a reconciliation with their offended Maker, a store of painful regrets, which must accompany them to the portals of eternity.

When Mrs. Marchmont witnessed the fiery temptations which assaulted the mind of her husband, a deep shadow passed over her newly-found happiness. He concealed from her, as much as was possible, the state of his feelings, but his restlessness during the hours of night, which he said was not caused by pain,

and his melancholy by day, led her to plead for his confidence :—

“ Herbert, my dear husband, will you not tell me what so disturbs you ? ”

“ Ah ! Hester, I have been baptized on a profession of my faith in Christ, and I feel its truth ; but oh ! *I have used you so badly*, I never can be forgiven.”

His wife wept at his words and the despairing tone in which they were uttered.

“ Do you think, my dear, that Christ’s blood can only cleanse some *particular* sin, or is it intended to remove *all* sin ? ”

“ But consider what a *desperate* sinner I have been—how *can* I ever be helped ? ”

“ Do you remember, Marchmont,—‘ Though your sins be as SCARLET—though they be *red* like *crimson*,’—the power of grace can pardon *all* ! ”

“ But my sins are of *every* kind.”

“ It is so,—but yet, ‘ Christ’s blood cleanseth from *all* sin’—and ‘ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in Him might have eternal life,’ are the declarations of that Word which is Divine Truth. Think for a moment of that little word ‘ *all* ’—of ‘ WHOSOEVER ’—how precious ! ”

“ Well, now,” said the tempted man, “ all that is true ; ~~if~~ I could only think of it when I feel so. But

you must hate me, and think me a hypocrite—you can have no confidence in me. How many times I promised, if you would forgive me, I would do better ! but when I would see M——, and S——, and L——, and all those, and think how much I had lost, it would vex me, and then I flew to the bottle, and to ——, and is there not as much danger now, as before ?”

“ No, Herbert, for though these may be your greatest temptations ; yet, now you know the way of escape, pray but more earnestly to be delivered, and Jesus will save you from *all* evil ; only keep your heart fixed on him.”

“ Ah ! but *there* is the *difficulty*.”

Finding he could not rest, Mrs. Marchmont suggested prayer, and leaving her bed, she fell on her knees by his side, and broke the silence of the night by her petitions for her weak and tempted husband. After many such scenes, he still lingered on, fearful, yet not wholly unbelieving.”

Very much of this weakness of faith had its source in physical disease. The frame of Herbert Marchmont was sinking under an accumulation of incurable diseases, and he felt most sensibly that all he could offer to the Lord, was but a wreck, a withered sacrifice. Oh ! how sweet and beautiful an offering is the first love of the heart ; the first fresh energies of youth, and *richly is that offering rewarded*, by the

happiness of an unembittered existence. Though in such offering, the scriptures declare there is *no merit*; for the sacrifice of a fallen nature, is accepted *only* through the obedience and intercession of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is *imputed* to the true believer in heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE ATLANTIC.

THOUGH both Mr. Marchmont and his wife clung to the faintest hopes of his restoration to health, it became every day more evident their hopes were vain. His strength diminished rapidly, and for this, sea-bathing was prescribed, and finally, a voyage to America was recommended as the last hope of saving his life. But how could he go without his wife? And how could she leave her little ones behind? To this it was replied, that as the season was mild, the voyage would prove a decided advantage to Mrs. Marchmont and her children, as she was in an unusually delicate situation, and the little ones were not rugged.

When the matter became decided that all were to accompany Mr. Marchmont, excepting Lizzie, who had some time before been placed at a boarding school, in the vicinity of her grandmother's residence, Mrs. Marchmont and her husband visited Mrs. Warwick, and also Lizzie, for the purpose of bidding each fare-

well. Mrs. Marchmont felt no apprehensions, nor any sadness more than usual, when parting with her beloved child, expecting to accomplish their voyage and return by the close of the midsummer vacation. Lizzie seemed delighted with the prospect of her father's recovery, and shared joyously in her mother's anticipations of a reunion at home.

"We shall be absent but two or three months, my daughter, and then, you will come home to remain with mother all the time. And we hope father will then be better, and, if the Lord pleases, we shall be very happy."

"And then, mother, I can assist you in taking care of little Emma, and I can read good books to father, you know."

But with Mrs. Warwick, the parting was otherwise, for she had arrived at the "sear and yellow" days of Time. More than eighty years she had traveled the journey of life, and the summons to eternity might be daily expected. Since her reconciliation with Hester, and her knowledge of the cruel treatment of her husband, her maternal love had returned, with even more than its former strength; and she had never, since then, regarded her son-in-law with kindness. And now, for the wife whom he had so abused, and whose years he had so inhumanly embittered, to brave the perils of the sea, with four little children, the youngest not five years old, and

herself soon to become once more a mother, was wronging both herself and her children. All the motives her maternal love could suggest were urged to dissuade Hester from undertaking the voyage. But Mrs. Marchmont considered it her *duty* to accompany her husband, and, therefore, all other considerations were laid aside. The mother and daughter folded each other in one long, tender embrace, and then parted—never more to meet on the shores of Time.

It was on one of the loveliest mornings of rosy June, in the year 1840, that Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont, their children, and the faithful Martha, embarked in the "Diamond," bound to St. John's, New Brunswick. In that place Mr. Marchmont had a relative, who was holding a responsible situation under the British government, and in his family, he expected his wife, children, and himself, to share all the privileges of a home, and to avail themselves of the restoratives so greatly needed for the invigoration of his exhausted health. A throng of Christian friends accompanied the invalid and his family to the place of embarkation. Whatever misgivings many of them felt as to the expediency of such an undertaking for Mr. Marchmont and his wife, only prayers and blessings and tender farewells were allowed to greet their ears. How soothingly upon the mind of Mr. Marchmont and Hester, fell the sweet influences of Chris-

tian friendship, many tokens of which they had ere this often experienced. As the vessel plowed its trackless way over the blue waves, and the shores of "dear, merrie England" receded from their view, "some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon." God, was God of the sea, as well as of the land, and was He not their Redeemer, their Friend ?

Fair skies and favorable breezes rendered seventeen days of the voyage delightful, but on the eighteenth, the wind changed with fearful suddenness. Preparations were made in all haste to avert the coming storm, but ere they were completed, it burst upon them in all its fury. Winds, clouds and waves, seemed commissioned as messengers of wrath ; and even the stout heart of the old weather-beaten captain himself quailed before the terrific tempest, as he beheld one portion after another, and others yet, of the doomed vessel, prostrated before its power. Back, back, among icebergs and rocks, was thrust the dismantled bark, farther and farther from her intended course. As the last faint hope of life, the passengers consented to be tied to the pumps to save them from sinking, until some vessel more fortunate than theirs should appear for their relief.

A storm at sea is one of the most appalling events human nature can witness. It is then it hears more

distinctly the voice of the Unseen, and witnesses the evidences of His power. But to this little company, who had embarked on board the Diamond so full of hope, it was peculiarly distressing. From the commencement of the storm, Mrs. Marchmont had been confined to her state-room by sea-sickness, and during a great part of the time was unconscious of the extent of their danger. The children, deprived of their mother's wonted attentions, and affrighted at the scenes which surrounded them, clung with tears and sobs to the kind-hearted servant, even more alarmed than they. Mr. Marchmont, whose disease had become greatly aggravated by the excitement of their situation, was in an agony of mental suffering, hightened by hearing the cries of many around to the Lord to have mercy on them and forgive their sins.

"It is all owing to *me*, Hester—let me sink and the rest will be safe ; my sins have brought this trouble upon you."

Then clasping his hands, at other times he would cry—

"Oh! why was I brought to hope in Jesus and then see my wife and my babes swallowed up in the sea!"

The few moments of respite which her sufferings from sea-sickness allowed her, Mrs. Marchmont de-

voted to comforting her distressed husband with the promises of the Gospel. The physician on board was devoted in his attentions to the suffering invalid and his wife, and those of the ship's company who could think of any one but themselves, tendered to Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont their kindest sympathies. But Hester felt no alarm ; amid the cries and prayers of those who were thus, in the hour of danger, appealing to a hitherto neglected God, she experienced the peace of those who trust in Him at all times. Often in an interval of ease did she endeavor to calm the fears of her husband and children by singing some sweet hymn, and one to her especially precious—

“ Begone, unbelief ! my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear ;
In prayer let me wrestle, and He will perform—
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.”

Particularly emphasizing the lines,

“ His love in times past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink.”

God was merciful, and after leading all to see how frail is man in the day of His power, He spake to the winds, “ Peace, be still ! and to the sea, and it was calm !”

Alas ! how soon did too many forget Him, and “ blessing their stars for their good luck,” insult the

Being who had saved them. Among these was the physician, who, addressing Hester, said—

"I declare, at one time I thought we would have been food for the fishes. But you, madam, have rallied beyond my expectations, and Mr. Marchmont, though now very feeble, may improve rapidly when he gets to land."

"I am truly thankful," Hester replied, "to our heavenly Father for staying the storm, and giving us all our lives, and I thank the ship's company also for the interest they have manifested in me and mine."

"Oh, oh!" said the doctor, "you are one of those who first thank God and then man. I guess you would not have been here to thank God if the company had refused to do their duty at the pumps!"

Feeling pained at the doctor's unbelief and ingratitude, Mrs. Marchmont attempted to direct his mind to God as the mover of men's hearts, strengthening them in duty. But when the soul is hardened in unbelief, it is of little avail to cast the pearls of truth before them.

The Diamond was six weeks out at sea, and bereft of her masts and sails, a mere wreck, she was finally picked up by the steamer ———, and towed into the harbor of New York. The passengers had lost nearly all their effects by the storm, and Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont shared greatly in the loss. Fortunately,

however, their *money* was saved, and though in a most melancholy plight when they landed, Mr. Marchmont and his wife possessed the means of retrieving the loss of their clothing, though many other invaluable articles had perished, which could never be replaced.

CHAPTER XIX.

LAST HOURS.—NEW SORROWS.

UPON arriving in the city of New York, Mr. and Mrs. Marchmont took lodgings at a hotel, and his extreme exhaustion rendered his situation so critical that his wife could not even lie down to rest her wearied frame ; but a night of watching and weeping and prayer, was that which Hester first spent in a land of strangers. But Mr. Marchmont lived to see the light of another day, and revived considerably. Knowing that Doctor L——, a former friend and associate, resided in Troy, he requested his wife to take him there, that he might have the advice and attention of the doctor, and in case of his death, his wife and children would be in the care of friends. Agreeably to his wishes, Mr. Marchmont made arrangements to hasten immediately to Troy, hoping that rest, and the attention and skill she knew would be exerted in his behalf, might obtain for him a least a few months of comfortable existence.

But so it was not to be. A few days of alternating between life and death, and the invalid husband sank too low for human skill, or love to cherish the shadow of a hope. As Mrs. Marchmont was one day bathing his face, and tempting him with a reviving draught, her husband faintly said—

“It is of no use, Hester—I shall never rise from this bed. And what will you do here? Go immediately home, and do not remain here in your loneliness, for bad as I have been, I do think you will miss me among strangers.”

Oh, the sad solemnity of those past hours! The past haunting the dying man with its painful regrets—the future with its fears for a bereaved wife and her fatherless children, in a strange land. Yet comforted by the Christian fortitude of his heroic wife, his feeble faith endeavored to banish all these gloomy visions, and look upward to the welcome promised even to the very chief of *repenting* sinners. All that Mrs. Marchmont could do to assure him of her forgiveness and her love, of her trust in God for herself and her children, she did, even upon her knees, and holding his emaciated hand. And as she moistened his dying lips, and wiped the death-damp from his brow, she told him of the love of the Son of God, and pointed to a heaven purchased by the blood of Christ, where, ransomed from sin, he should ever live, pure, holy, and happy. She spoke of the frail,

diseased, and dying body changed into an incorruptible and glorious form.

And thus, on the second week after landing on the shores of a far-off clime—Herbert Marchmont died—penitent, believing, hoping in the all-sufficient Atonement—saved, as “a brand plucked from the burning”—and grace was triumphant over sin.

And thus had Hester Marchmont crossed the ocean amidst terror, storm and sickness, to find, within a few days, herself a widow, and her children fatherless. To lay the remains of him whose name she bore, beneath the sod, far from the graves of his fathers, and among strangers, to find friends true and kind to sympathize with her and uphold her in the true faith. Though strong of nerve and heart, and trusting sincerely in an all-sufficient Saviour, she was yet a *woman*—a *mother*. The vigor of her fine constitution was impaired by years of mental toil and bodily suffering, and in her peculiarly trying situation, she must have been more than woman, if nature had not for a time reeled beneath the weight of affliction. She felt her bereavement, she felt keenly her present situation—but she felt them as a Christian—humbled, broken-hearted, but still leaning upon the Arm which alone could sustain.

The grief of the little fatherless children for the loss of their parent, affected Mrs. Marchmont pain-

well. Mrs. Marchmont felt no apprehensions, nor any sadness more than usual, when parting with her beloved child, expecting to accomplish their voyage and return by the close of the midsummer vacation. Lizzie seemed delighted with the prospect of her father's recovery, and shared joyously in her mother's anticipations of a reunion at home.

"We shall be absent but two or three months, my daughter, and then, you will come home to remain with mother all the time. And we hope father will then be better, and, if the Lord pleases, we shall be very happy."

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Then clasping his hands, at other times he would cry—

"Oh! why was I brought to hope in Jesus and then see my wife and my babes swallowed up in the sea!"

The few moments of respite which her sufferings from sea-sickness allowed her, Mrs. Marchmont de-

ed in the ear of their ever watchful mother, were frequently too touching to admit of replies.

"Won't I go soon to see papa, and Jesus too—up in Heaven?" said Fanny.

"I trust you will, my dear, and mother hopes to go there too."

"And bring the baby, and Rachel too, won't you, mamma?"

On the day of their death, little Henry seemed to sink faster than his sister, and opening for a moment his weary eyes, said,—

"Kiss me, ma—I'm going to sleep—a very long sleep."

And surely that sleep was long, for it knew no waking. And Fanny soon slept also, and the angels carried both dear ones into their Father's bosom.

Once more did stranger-friends assist Mrs. Marchmont in "burying her dead out of her sight."—*These* were her *lovely* dead. She laid them to rest in their early graves, by the side of their father, and weeping fond, sad tears upon their little beds, but still committing them to the care of an Eye that never slumbers, and returned to the abode of her sojourn, to press still the living still more closely to her heart, and school it to such a resignation as became a disciple of the "Man of Sorrows."

The expenses attendant upon the illness and inter-

ment of her husband and children, had greatly reduced the sum from which Mrs. Marchmont was drawing the means of her support. Looking with every arrival from England, for remittances to enable her to return, and being anxious to return with her remaining children, she formed no acquaintances beyond the family with whom she resided, and that of the excellent Alderman Mc'K——, whose wife belonged to the Society of Friends. Devoting herself exclusively to her children, and to religious exercises, she secluded herself wholly from the world, attending only upon the Lord's Day worship. The kindness of the friends in Troy, among whom her lot was thus providentially cast, was to her inexpressibly consoling. *Their* hearts were touched by her lonely and afflicted condition, and her Christian submission, and calmness of demeanor—*hers*, by their unaffected and tender sympathy; and the spirit often rose in gratitude to God, and daily did she call down blessings upon their heads, in her secret visits to a Mercy Seat; and long lingered the memory of their love.

Other circumstances, also, occurred to alleviate the sadness of her lot, and to her they were peculiarly cheering. When leaving England, friends in the Baptist communion, learning her contemplated routes of travel through the States, pressed upon her acceptance letters of introduction to their friends, in

different places in the Union. These, as they were besides letters of friendship to the individuals themselves, she had, as soon as her circumstances permitted, forwarded to their places of destination. And now, answers were daily arriving, expressing the kindest solicitude for her welfare, and filled with the outpourings of Christian hearts. One of these was from a family, formerly of the Rev. Mr. Mann's Church, Maize-Pond, London. To them, and also a few others, she replied at length, informing them of her bereavements, her loneliness, and her hope of soon returning to England. In return, came pressing invitations to visit them at their residence, in the "Queen City of the West;" suggesting that the change might benefit her both physically and mentally. But their kind invitation she could not accept,—her remaining children were exceedingly delicate, requiring all her care, and her funds were becoming so low as to occasion some anxiety. But this latter circumstance she revealed to none of her friends, hoping daily for a change for the better.

CHAPTER XX.

PERPLEXITIES—SORROWS.

GREAT anxiety was experienced by the friends of those who had sailed in the *Diamond*, as week after week of the time appointed for her arrival at St. John's went by, and all was silence concerning her fate. The first intelligence which arrived, announced her to have become hopelessly wrecked, and threw dismay and mourning over many a household, for all on board were reported lost. This news reached also the relatives of Herbert and Hester Marchmont, and their fate was considered as decided. Claims to their property were immediately made, and appropriated as soon as possible. These had hardly become established, when a letter was received from Mrs. Marchmont, detailing her misfortunes, and requesting funds to enable her to return. Accompanying this, was a letter to her daughter, still at school. These fell into the hands of a near relative, and prompted by motives of cupidity, he suppressed, or

destroyed them, keeping the other relatives in ignorance of any such communications. Again Mrs. Marchmont wrote, and again, but each letter shared the same fate, until becoming discouraged, she addressed, though very reluctantly, the sister from whom she had endured so much cruel reviling in consequence of religion. It was received about the same time that a vessel from America brought tidings of the safety of the passengers and crew of the *Diamond*. This altered the state of affairs, but it was thought best to leave them as they were, until Mrs. Marchmont should return, as she had stated in her letter that she was expecting money from the trustees of her property, and had long wondered why it was not remitted. No suspicion of fraud crossed the mind of her sister, and supposing the trustees would attend to their own affairs, she said nothing about it. But she enclosed a draft, which had been placed with her, as due to Mr. Marchmont, from some unknown individual. Hester had related the story of her bereavements, and adverted to her extreme loneliness in consequence, and her anxiety to see her gentle Lizzie. Her sister replied, not in the spirit of condolence or sympathy, but in that of upbraiding. "Had you," wrote she, "continued in the bosom of our Holy Church, instead of running after those low *Baptists*, your husband never would have gone to the lengths he did, and might have retained

his health. It was your stubborn refusal to go with him into company, which drove him to desperation, and ruined his health. The loss of this sent him from home, and found graves for himself and his children in a foreign land. I do not pity you at all, for you have brought it all on yourself, by your despicable fanaticism." Such were the sympathies of a sister, whose nature was perverted by bigotry and the prejudices of ignorance. Such are the lessons imparted by the dignitaries of the Established Church; how far unlike the teachings of those of whom they pretend to be the successors! For it is ever thus, (the case of Mrs. Marchmont not being an isolated instance,) that secession from the Church of England is, with them, the unpardonable sin, and forever cuts off the Dissenter from the sympathies of social and domestic Episcopalianism. Intolerance is the very breath of its life, even with that of Papacy—happy they who are safe from its blighting influences.

The eldest daughter of Mrs. Marchmont, who had been left at school, being of a remarkably affectionate and sensitive temperament, united to a frame of great delicacy, was nearly prostrated by the supposed loss of both her beloved parents, and remained under the care of her governess, in a very precarious condition of health. Her aunts did not interest themselves in her case, and from malicious desire to aggravate Mrs. Marchmont's troubles, by adding to

her suspense and anxiety, said nothing at all of Lizzie, leaving her mother to wonder why even that trifling comfort was withheld.

When Mrs. Marchmont received the letter from her sister, its cruel revilings and entire silence concerning her precious child, and her pecuniary affairs, added to her weight of trouble that which she had not for a moment anticipated. Hitherto her trials had been those of the *spirit*, now comparative poverty for herself and her children stared her in the face, and how could she meet it all, unprepared as she was by nature, education, and habit, to encounter its ills? Then to resign for a long, long time, the hope of returning to her home, of seeing her dear Lizzie, was harder than all.

In her sorrow she felt that to lay her sweet children to rest by the side of those gone before, and her own weary head beneath the ground, would be indeed a relief. Earth seemed to present no avenue of escape from a host of ills she knew nothing of by experience, but something by past observation. Could she write again to such a sister as her's, and detail her anxieties and wants? To do so would only expose her to still greater insults and more cruel reproaches, without affording any hope of relief. But no path was open—she knew the way to the mercy-seat, and thither she bore her perplexities, and there *did she* plead for counsel. The true believer who

prays in *faith*, as did Mrs. Marchmont, may not find the desires immediately granted, but the eye of Him who notes the sparrow's fall, is ever upon His children, and He will "lead them by a way they know not," through all the wilderness to the Canaan above. Resolved to bear meekly and bravely all the Lord saw fit to lay upon her, she proceeded promptly to act as her best judgment seemed to direct.

Her first step was to call to her side her faithful servant who had accompanied her from England, and acquaint her with her inability any longer to employ her.

"But, madam, I can't bear to go leave you with the care of the dear babies, and you all lone, it'll kill you here. Never mind, ma'am, I don't want no pay, and I'll stay with you for nothing, till you gets the money from dear old England. Bless its name! I wish we's all there to-day."

"But, Martha, I cannot even pay your board, if I do not pay you wages, and you know the people will not board you free. You are a good girl, Martha, and God will bless you for your kindness to me and the dear children. But now get all ready that you can, and I will inquire for a good home for you, and perhaps you will get back to England long before me."

"This dre'ful country, it's so damp, so hot, so cold, nobody knows which is which,—I'm sure, ma'am, it'll

kill you and the babies too, and I heard the doctors say that too."

" Well, Martha, you know God can take care of us here as well as in England, and if we die, we will go to a better country than England. But if my money arrives I will return home, and then you can go with me."

Singularly enough, not very long after, Mrs. M. was informed of a family going to England, who wished a servant woman to accompany them, and in a short time her faithful Martha bade her farewell with many tears, and set sail for " dear old England." To one reared in affluence and ease, the parting with the only domestic was a severe trial, which none but those similarly situated, can fully understand, and it was rendered more bitter by the loneliness of her lot as a stranger. Martha was not the hireling of a day ; she had lived with Mrs. Marchmont for many years, had warded off many a blow aimed by an inebriate husband, and had stood by her side through the deepest of her sorrows. She was more to Mrs. Marchmont than a servant—she was a friend, one devoted and tried.

With three little children, the eldest scarcely four years of age, and a babe sickly from its birth, still in her arms, Mrs. Marchmont looked around for the means of still keeping them and herself in a comfortable home. Stating her difficulties to the benevolent

Mrs. McK——, she requested her to obtain some plain sewing, which she might do in the intervals of attending upon her children. This was speedily obtained, and afforded her a temporary relief. As she was one day showing to the same lady some beautiful embroidery, wrought by her own fingers, it was suggested that to teach the art to a class of young ladies would be quite profitable. Although aware of the difficulty of doing so with the care of her little ones devolving solely on herself, she gladly availed herself of the proposal. Mrs. M'K—— volunteered to obtain all the scholars, while the kind friend with whom she boarded, offered her the free use of a room in which to teach. How grateful did the stranger-widow feel to her heavenly Father for thus raising her up friends in the hour of need! Her funds could now be made available for boarding, and clothing was not at that time needed, and then she could still spare a little for charity.

As soon as possible, Mrs. M. entered upon her new vocation, and notwithstanding the difficulties attending it, was enabled to give entire satisfaction. Her days were spent in unceasing industry, and her nights were sleepless from weariness, yet she tried hard to be cheerful, and hope for the future.

Mrs. Marchmont still continued her efforts to receive intelligence of her beloved daughter, and also to obtain the funds which were still her's, to defray

her expected return to her home. She wrote to a trusted friend in the church of which she was a member, desiring him to call on the trustees, and ascertain why her applications had been disregarded, and commissioned him to convey a letter to her daughter, and to ascertain her situation. This done, she resolved to commit the result to the Lord and live in His presence day by day, assured He would "do all things well."

The class in embroidery had completed their course of instruction, and a second term was in contemplation. Mrs. Marchmont was one day nursing her babe, when the little one suddenly looked up in her face, gave a quick gasp, and in a moment was gone. The shock deprived Mrs. Marchmont of her consciousness, and the cries of the children brought the family into the room. The mother and her babe were placed on a bed, and a physician quickly summoned. Kindness and skill restored Mrs. M. to life, but the babe had fled to its home in the skies. When the tears of maternal affection had gushed forth, relieving the full heart of its weight, Mrs. Marchmont was enabled to look upon the dead babe with the calmness of a Christian, and even to bless God that He had secured it thus early from the storms of life. Ah! the Christian's hope, *the doctrine of the Resurrection*, who would exclude it from his belief and his heart?

The physician who had so often attended upon the widowed mother and her family, felt much sympathy with the afflicted stranger. In a few days after the burial of her babe, he called on a visit of friendship. Closely observing the little ones who were left, he said to Mrs. Marchmont—

“I trust you will have strength given you to bear much sorrow still, for I fear you will not keep *these* children long.”

“Why so, sir, do you think they are ill?”

“I do, madam, but they will not likely be so very long. Their constitutions are very frail, and they seem to have suffered for some time.”

The mother's own fears had long before been excited concerning these children, although she could find no decided symptoms of illness. She begged the doctor to prescribe for them, if he could do so to any present advantage, and added—

“If it is the Lord's will to bereave me of my children, I will submit—I will not, like one of old, ‘refuse to be comforted.’ They will be with their best Friend.”

So Mrs. Marchmont reasoned; and very soon was she called upon to act as well as to believe. In a few days, another of her little ones lay prostrate with disease, and before he was laid in the ground, the other became ill. No skill, nor nursing, could stay the coming of death, and swiftly he bore the fair child-

dren from earth. Two of the most skillful physicians in the place, attended upon the little ones, but could give their disease no especial name. With Mrs. Marchmont's consent, an examination of their bodies was made, and water was discovered on the brain. They declared this to have been produced by their fright, during the storm at sea, and the violent motion of the vessel.

And now, Mrs. Marchmont was alone in the world. Her language, as she returned from the last resting place of her darlings, was, "Though clouds and darkness are round about Him, yet justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." She was a *mother*, one who loved her children with an unselfish love, and she could not but *feel*, intensely feel, the stroke which had cut them down in the budding of their young life. The necessity for that constant care and attention she had of late daily exercised, having ceased to exist, her own wearied powers gave way, and she was now, herself, upon a bed of sickness. Not only was her body stricken low, but her mind also, and reason fled from its throne.

She was surrounded by friends who pitied and loved her, and their kindness was exerted to its utmost extent in her behalf. But oh! what tales of woe did her unconscious wanderings reveal! and yet, what outpourings of a heart accustomed to go to its God in every hour of sorrow! In her delirium, the scenes

of her persecution were acted over again, and secrets were made known, which drew tears from attending friends. Such prayers were uttered as had, ere this, had no listeners but God and the silent watchers from the midnight skies of London. And many a Bible sermon on *baptism* did the fevered lips and tongue discourse, which might have convinced an unbeliever when a pulpit homily would have failed. And then, anon, her dead children were addressed, as if still with her, and her English home seemed a present reality.

By the blessing of God upon the means used, Mrs. Marchmont was restored to reason, and a comparative degree of health. But a deeply seated melancholy ensued, which gave the friends around her great anxiety, lest it should permanently affect her intellect. They kindly compelled her to ride out, and to walk abroad in the pure air, and occasionally to mingle in cheerful society. But *her* best moments were those she spent in reading the Bible and in prayer.

Her thoughts dwelt much upon her absent child, now doubly dear to her heart, and upon the necessity of exerting herself for her own support, until she should receive the expected remittances. Bewildered and perplexed, to use her own words, she "cried unto the Lord with a strong cry, and He heard, and directed her way."

Memory brought before her the consolations she had enjoyed in the days of her persecution, while engaged in *active* duties, works of piety and benevolence. It pointed to cases where here and there, some of earth's poor ones, and those in affliction, had been led to the Saviour, lived faithfully and died happily, blessing her with their last breath as the instrument of their salvation. Why should she not *now*, when wearied with plying the needle, do something for the cause of the Redeemer? Obeying what she deemed the suggestions of the Spirit, she selected a bundle of tracts, and drawing her widow's veil closely around her, secretly sallied forth to seek the resorts of the lowly. That day she distributed but few of her tracts, as finding several who, like herself were in affliction, she conversed with them on the glorious hopes of the Gospel, its power to cheer and sustain under the heaviest woes—briefly alluding to her own sorrows, and the grace which had been granted to her through all. On returning from these scenes, she found they had in a measure rendered her own spirit more cheerful, and resolved to seek them daily. Meanwhile she devoted herself closely to needle-work, that she might not become involved in debt, the thought of it being horror to her mind, the whole of her funds having been exhausted in paying bills incurred by illness and interments.

It was some time in the course of her daily visits to the poor, that Mrs. Marchmont met with a lady from the west of England, and being engaged in a common cause, the hearts of each became attracted to the other in an unusual degree. Learning the tale of Mrs. Marchmont's affliction, her new friend strongly persuaded her not to think of returning to England, but to remain in America, where the field was larger and laborers more needed. There was but one tie now binding her to England, her darling Elizabeth—the graves of her dead were here—and she listened to the suggestions of her friend as to something of which she had never thought. "If only her Lizzie could be sent to her—she was now at an age to comfort and assist her greatly—and the property which was her's at home, might sustain her abundantly in America." So reflecting and praying to be guided aright, she resolved for the present to relinquish her anxiety to return, and wait the leadings of Providence.

Making an earnest effort to throw off the melancholy which had pervaded her spirit, she acquainted her friends with her resolution to resume her instructions in embroidery. They heard this announcement with pleasure, and the requisite assistance was speedily offered her. But they did not know that her feet daily crossed the thresholds of the poor and

the afflicted, and that from the widow's earnings they were supplied with many a "mite"—and by her counsels and prayers were led to think of a better world.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FIRE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

SOME time passed on in these employments, at the close of which, Mrs. Marchmont found herself raised above debt and want, and possessed of a little surplus besides her clothing. She had received an urgent invitation to visit a dear friend, Mrs. N——, about two miles N. W. from Troy. This lady was one who drank deeply at the fountains of Christian love, and the effect was sweetly exhibited in her daily walk and conversation. Piety and benevolence were her prominent characteristics; of course Mrs. Marchmont could not but feel cheered and strengthened while in her society.

Two weeks of her visit had passed, and it was the night of the Sabbath. She had not yet closed her eyes, though it was nearly midnight, for wakefulness had become with her a habit, when suddenly she thought she heard a cry of "fire!" Going immediately to her window, she raised it and looked out, when, to her dismay, she saw a long line of flame

issuing from the buildings around, and yet the inhabitants seemed buried in sleep, until again the fire-cry broke more loudly upon her ear. Forgetful of herself, and thinking only of her friends, who had several children, one or two in their own room, and the others in the next, she ran to their door, and knocking loudly, called Mr. N—— to rouse, for the house was on fire. After ascertaining with certainty they were awakened, she ran to the next door, and then to another and another, alarming the inmates, but forgetting that she was still in her night-dress, and that all she had in the world was in her own room. By this time all was alarm and confusion, the fire had broken out in every part of the block, and the peril of life was becoming every moment greater. Thinking only of the children, while Mr. and Mrs. N—— were endeavoring to save their goods, Mrs. Marchmont snatched up two of the smallest and carried them safely out at the door, and then returning, made her way up to seize two others, calling the rest to follow her amidst the smoke rising all around. Mrs. N—— and herself were descending with the remaining little ones, when a strong arm snatched them from the flames just as the burning stairs gave way. Mrs. Marchmont knew nothing more until she found herself and Mrs. N—— sitting upon some embers, the heat of which aroused them to consciousness. All was ruin around them, but the children and the

family were safe. Her destitute condition now, for the first time, flashed upon her mind, and the words of Job seemed to accompany it, "Naked came I hither—naked shall I return—the Lord gave, and He hath taken away;" and yet, she thought, "blessed be the name of the Lord." In a land of strangers, in the dead hours of the night, with no shelter for her head, no clothing for her body—alone—and all around her the sounds of crying, and moans of despair, from those who had lost their all—she stood lost and bewildered, gazing vacantly around.

Mrs. Marchmont was roused from this sad stupor, by a grasp on her arm, and a face of most singular expression, peering into her own, with a pair of eyes whose lustre seemed, in the light of the moon, almost unearthly. The sweet low voice of the lady addressed her, as she half urged her along with her friendly hand,—

"Come with me, my dear sister, for the Lord has sent me to you."

So absorbed was Mrs. Marchmont in gazing on the face which was before her, that she thought not of replying to the kind entreaty. There was in its expression an approach to wildness, which seemed accompanied by the purely spiritual, and at the first view, completely fascinated the beholder. Again the lady spake—

"When I saw the flames to-night, dear sister, I

went into my closet, and thinking the whole town was on fire, I prayed the Lord to direct me to one or more of His dear children, if He had any who were sufferers in this calamity, and though I never saw you but once, that once assured me you were a Christian, and to-night the Lord brought no one before me but you,—so come along, my sister.”

Astonishment at this wonderful token of the Lord's goodness, so overpowered Mrs. Marchmont that she fainted at the feet of her rescuing angel, and when she recovered, the scene was changed. She opened her eyes to see loving and anxious faces bending over her ; to hear eager, happy whispers of, “She lives !”—“She is better !”—to find herself on a bed of comfort, within a spacious and elegantly furnished room. The lady, whose friendly hand had urged her from a scene of ruin, embraced her lovingly, and bade her in kind tones—

“Be quiet, now, dear ; take your rest ; there are none here but friends.”

A gush of tears, and sobs succeeded the severe tension which Hester's nerves had so long endured, and knowing she needed this relief, her kind hostess allowed her to weep freely, unrestrained, until the power to speak should return.

Mrs. Marchmont's first feeble words were utterances of the most heartfelt gratitude and humility ; and “truly,” said she, “language is powerless to de-

scribe my emotions." By her side, knelt the sweet lady of the house, with all in the room, and aspirations of gratitude to God for His goodness, rose in the stillness of that early morn.

And thus, for the first time, had Hester Marchmont become a dependent upon the bounty of another—she upon whom the good things of this life had, from her earliest memory, been poured in profusion. Nature would have rebelled, pride rose up in arms, and independence would have fought with circumstances, but grace whispered,—“IT IS THE LORD, let Him do as seemeth good.”

“Give yourself no anxiety, you shall be most welcome to my house, its comforts shall be yours, and your clothing will soon be made up ;” was the kind language of her new friend, Miss A——.

Could a *believer*, thus situated, do aught than trust in a God who had opportunely appeared for her relief? Though to human eye the future was enveloped in clouds and mist, the rainbow of hope spanned the darkest of them all—and by faith she heard the covenant-promise, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

There were some things which, at times, weighed heavily upon her spirit, such as the loss of her diary and the letters of friends ; relics of her departed husband and children, and some valuable jewelry she had reserved for a time of need ; all these were far

more precious than her clothing, though that was elegant and costly, a small part of it having been recovered from the wreck, and the remainder purchased after her arrival at New York and Troy. It required all her Bible-taught spirit of submission to bear with composure the thought that she had nothing now remaining of the loved and gone before.

A day and a night subsequent to the eventful morning which had first found her beneath the hospitable roof of Miss A——, had passed, and Hester was sitting alone at a window, reflecting on the past, its long series of trials and mercies also. A cloud was resting upon her spirit, from which the faces of the loved in her dear native land seemed to look out and beckon her to return. Tears flowed and a choking grief was tugging at her heart at thoughts of the distance between herself and the cherished daughter who had ever been to her as an angel of peace. The vast ocean now seemed interminable—when should she cross it again! Thus had she sat, lonely in her sorrow, for her benefactress was out on some errand of mercy, when a young lady passed the window, who seemed looking for the house. She was followed by a boy carrying a large basket. The lady knocked at the door, and then opened it, the boy sat down the basket within and immediately left. As Mrs. Marchmont advanced to inquire her errand, the lady met her, saying—

"Please to examine this basket and accept its contents for your own use;" and without giving Mrs. Marchmont time to reply, closed the door and walked rapidly away. Mrs. Marchmont stood for a moment astonished, but then proceeded to examine the basket. She found it contained garments of every description needed to form an entire and comfortable outfit for herself, and beneath these, packages containing tea, coffee, sugar, bread, &c. At the bottom lay one paper, carefully tied, which she paused to look at, wondering what else could have been sent, for it seemed that nothing was wanting. Opening the paper, she found it contained *salt*. "Oh!" said Mrs. Marchmont, when afterwards relating the circumstance, "what a lesson was concealed in that paper! As I looked at it, the words 'Remember Lot's wife' darted into my mind. 'Look not behind thee!'" Pressing the package to her lips, she dropped on her knees and thanked God for the lesson, and for the blessings so unexpectedly granted. She resolved no more to look back upon the past, but go forward, trusting in her heavenly Father. She from that hour committed herself unreservedly into his keeping, to his guidance into such paths as he pleased, and to be employed in his service alone. Sweet indeed was this season of consecration, and long did its influence remain.

Mrs. Marchmont had received these anonymous

gifts as indications that she could commence again a life of independence, though that life might require extreme exertion. She named these half-formed intentions to her hostess, when recounting the strange visit during her absence.

Miss A——, the lady who had drawn Mrs. Marchmont from the ruins of the fire, to take shelter within her dwelling, was possessed of great piety, benevolence and wealth—the latter had become her's at the death of her parents. The house in which she resided had been theirs just as it was, and a married sister having died some months before, she had taken charge of her three motherless children. She also devoted a part of every day to visiting and instructing the poor and the ignorant. Her dress was singularly plain ; her deportment and her habits indicated peculiar self-denial. She lived in daily communion with God, and worldly affairs received but a secondary attention. How much did Mrs. Marchmont feel strengthened in her Christian life ! how much did she learn by intercourse with this disciple of Christ !

Upon Mrs. Marchmont's announcing her intention to make an effort to provide for herself, Miss A——, with much earnestness, desired Mrs. Marchmont to make her house her permanent home until she should see a way opened to return to her native clime. Mrs. Marchmont replied, that to such an engagement

she could not pledge herself, as she had made a vow to the Lord to follow the leadings of His providence wherever they might tend. But in gratitude to her kind hostess, she agreed to remain with her and take charge of her three interesting children until Miss A—— should return from a journey she had long held in contemplation. This matter being decided, a few days sufficed for the requisite preparations. Miss A—— requested Mrs. Marchmont to go daily during her absence to a certain room at a certain hour, to pray for the salvation of these three orphans, and wherever she herself might be, she would meet her in spirit at that hour for the same purpose. In about a month Miss A—— returned, and her first words on meeting Mrs. Marchmont were—

“I know you have kept your promise, for the Lord assured me so.”

Hester remained with this remarkable woman until her death, which occurred not very long afterwards, and was the result of a slow but sure disease, which had affected her for many years. Upon her death-bed she gave Mrs. Marchmont solemn and tender injunctions which were never forgotten.

“Work always for God, my dear friend, but take *particular* care of your *body*, for, remember, it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and if you injure it, you displease your Maker. God has much for you to do in America, and He will soon show you what it is.”

Mrs. Marchmont tendered her dying friend all the soothing attentions in her power, feeling it a privilege to minister to one who was so truly a child of God. She enjoyed the pleasure of knowing that her presence was among the friends who thronged around the rich Miss A——, the most desired of any. She received her last directions concerning her affairs, and those of the orphan children, in charge for a relative at a distance, who would, in time, attend to their arrangement.

Miss A—— did not leave the world without giving an unmistakable evidence of her friendship for the widow whom she had sought out, thus rendering her comfortable for a time in the future. With a smile upon her lips, the Christian woman fell asleep in Jesus, and thus was another beloved friend added to the long list of Hester's bereavements. She closed the lids of those once speaking eyes, while her own were dim with tears, but she sorrowed not as those who have no hope, and the beautiful memories of the lovely Miss A—— were a joy to her through life.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHANGING SCENES—CHARACTERISTICS.

ONCE more did Hester Marchmont find herself alone upon the broad ocean of life, yet not alone, the Pilot who was to guide her frail bark was divine, and she felt no fear. She might wander the wide earth over, but her soul would one day find rest in the bosom of its God. Perplexity and foreboding sought entrance into the sanctuary of her heart, pointing with their gaunt fingers at the storm-clouds lowering in the distance ; but turning from them with averted eyes, she bade them "begone," and clinging to the almighty Arm, she said, "I will fear no evil."

The kind invitations of Mrs. Marchmont's Baptist friends in the city of C——, which had formerly been extended to her, recurred to her mind, and it seemed impressed upon her now to accept of them. After a long and tearful visit to the graves of her beloved dead, and sad and tender farewells to those dear friends, who had aided and cheered her in affliction,

Mrs. Marchmont departed for her expected destination. Among the passengers on the boat, were some warm-hearted Baptists, who became interested in her appearance, and drew from her some of the outlines of her history. Among the topics of conversation in which the passengers engaged, was that of religion. Its truths were zealously advocated by some, and ridiculed by others. Fresh in the memory of Hester rose the scene of the storm at sea, and with modesty, yet with heartfelt earnestness, she spoke of the power of Him who was mighty to save the body as well as the soul. A gentleman standing by, inquired of her, "where she was going?" Mrs. Marchmont, though not yet accustomed to the American usages of inquiry, replied, that her destination was C——.

"I am very happy to meet you, madam, as I may, perhaps, be of some slight service to you. Here is my card."

Mrs. Marchmont took the card and read upon it, "Rev. E—— P——."

"Of what denomination, sir?" Mrs. Marchmont inquired in turn.

"The Regular Baptist."

"Ah, indeed!" was the happy exclamation.

The lone woman again found herself among friends. Mr. P—— wrote her a note of introduction to a brother minister, of the Baptist church, in C——, which Hester thankfully accepted. The other

friends invited her to accompany them to their home, and remain until she could ascertain the residence of her friends. Mrs. Marchmont did so, but oh! how the homesick, weary woman sighed for her own English home! The green lawns and parks of her native land; the crowded city, where she had borne so much of heart-suffering, yet had realized so many Christian joys; the sweet face and form of her darling Lizzie; the church where she had so often sat in the assembly of the saints, pastor, and friends beloved; all came trooping by, pleading at her heart's brine, "Return, return!" Sadness rested on her countenance, and chained her tongue, even though as Christians, these stranger friends strove to cheer the bereaved. They were happy—they could not read her sorrows, yet the lone widow thanked and blessed them for their kindness, though it availed not.

A day passed, and Mrs. Marchmont was pressed in the warm embrace of her English friends. The reception she enjoyed was worthy of the hostess and her guest. How pre-eminent should Christians be in the practice of hospitality, so nobly urged upon them by the Master and His disciples of old. True hospitality, is not feasting nor putting our guests in so splendidly furnished, but cold rooms, nor inviting a crowd to visit them. It is surrounding them with an atmosphere of *home comfort*, unostentatious in its

preparations, undisturbed in its quiet, and affording time for thought and conversation upon the things of a higher life.

Some weeks passed away, in resting from the fatigues of the past, and of her recent journey, and in recounting, at her friend's request, the history of her trials and mercies. But Mrs. Marchmont was not one to remain long inert, or dependent in any degree upon the bounty of others. The friends with whom she was residing, would not listen to any proposals for her personal exertion, knowing well, that when her situation should be made known to her London friends, the necessity for such exertion would cease to exist. Without acquainting them with her intentions, she sought counsel of some whose acquaintance she had formed, and who would not look upon her wishes in an unfavorable light. They referred her to the Rev. ———, one of the most prominent Baptist ministers in the city, who would be sure to sympathise with her, and knew better how to advise than any one else. As the friend was prevented from accompanying her, he gave her an additional letter of introduction, but advising her to present also those she already possessed. With a palpitating heart Mrs. Marchmont set out on her strange errand, in a strange city, and often did she lift her heart to God for strength to bear her through an undertaking so humiliating to her native pride. The house was

found ; its marble steps and elegant front, reminded her of the time, not long since, when she was mistress of a mansion in Regent's Park, even more elegant than the one before her. Oh ! how busy then was the adversary ! With trembling fingers she drew the bell, and requesting to see the Rev. ———, was ushered into his presence. Without power to speak, she handed him the letter. Hastily supposing it some appeal to charity, as to such he was daily subject, he threw it on the table, and casting a cold glance at the veiled form before him, said—

“ Haven't time to attend to it now—am just going with my family for a drive—call again.”

With a formal bow he opened the door, out of which retreated the heart-stricken stranger, ready to sink with the weight of her emotion. An elegant carriage, with a pair of splendid horses, stood at the door,—the minister, his lady, and their beautifully dressed children, entered, and were whirled away, while the weary widow sought alone and on foot, the residence of her friend.

How looked the MASTER on a scene like this ! and how often do such occur beneath His all-seeing eye ! How often do Christians forget to be humble, kind and thoughtful, passing too coldly by those who are the Lord's own children, “ dear to Him as the apple of His eye ! ” And did not the heart of the Rev. ———

smite him often in after days when he learned *who* was the woman veiled in black, to whom he had not offered the civility of a chair! And even had she been the poorest or the vilest upon God's earth, as a disciple of the "meek and lowly in heart," he should have awarded her kind tones and words—and a listening ear—for these cost nothing, while they add much to the treasury of happiness—to the sunlight of the suffering.

It was not easy for one reared from infancy among the proudest of her native land, accustomed to intercourse with the nobility of the realm, and descended from the peerage, so suddenly to bring herself down to the common walks of life. Those born in a republican land cannot share the feelings of one like Mrs. Marchmont, who had drawn in with her daily breath the spirit of conventionalism and rank. She knew that all this "pride of the flesh" must be subdued, and she petitioned earnestly for grace to give her the victory, and reconcile her to any circumstances which might fall to her lot. There was that in her finely chiselled features, her delicate complexion, her dark eyes often flashing with the light of other days, her carriage, remarkably erect and graceful, which rendered her an object of notice wherever she might be seen. All this had been hidden from the view of Rev. ———, when she stood bowed before him, and struggling to hide her emotion; but on

a subsequent acquaintance he recognized one who had frequently passed him in the streets without deigning a look. Ah! even true believers are inheritors of a nature aspiring "to be as gods," and sometimes "forget the pit whence they were digged."

Mrs. Marchmont's peculiar education and finer habits also unfitted her for such employments as would have presented themselves to others without causing a pang in the acceptance. But that Book which was "the man of her counsel," and which she still consulted daily, pointed now, to the grace of *humility*, as that which she most needed. Grace had supported her amidst the deep waters of affliction, it must now be exercised in bringing down every high thought, and transforming her *whole* nature into the likeness of Christ.

While Mrs. Marchmont was in this state of uncertainty concerning her worldly prospects, she met with a lady whose husband was editor of a public journal, and who furnished much of the matter for his columns from her own pen. This lady became greatly interested in Mrs. M., and finding she had traveled extensively in various parts of Europe, requested her to furnish sketches of various kinds, that she might insert them in the columns of her husband's paper. Mrs. Marchmont cheerfully consented, at which the lady professed herself so gratified that she invited

Hester to accompany her on an excursion to Lower Virginia, offering to bear all the expenses of the trip.

Pleased at an opportunity thus afforded her to visit a portion of the United States, of which she had heard so much, and willing to engage in any thing which could prevent her from grieving over the past, the invitation was accepted. Mrs. Marchmont saw around her now an entirely new phase of life, and from it she drew her own conclusions, though she never obtruded her sentiments. She found herself an object of much interest and attention, but in proportion as the hospitality and kindness of the Southerners were extended, the friendship of her new acquaintance diminished, and it became quite evident that the motives in desiring Mrs. Marchmont to accompany her, were preëminently selfish. This was proved, when upon their return, she presented Hester with a bill of all her expenses during the journey. This was a serious drawback in the present reduced state of her funds, but an honorable pride led her immediately to pay the bill, though it left her once more with scarcely a resource. Disgusted with the falsity of such pretended friendship, Mrs. Marchmont from that time discontinued all intercourse with her late acquaintance.

Some time elapsed subsequent to Mrs. Marchmont's return, when she was one day accosted in the street by a lady, whose appearance was very pre-

possessing. Introducing herself to Mrs. M., she said, "Excuse me, madam, but your appearance answers the description given me of a stranger in our city, who is visiting a distressed family on — street."

"I have done so on several occasions," was the reply.

"Allow me to inquire how, being a stranger, you could hear of the case?"

"It is my delight to *find out* the destitute, for unless they are *sought*, one-half their sorrows are not known. I thought by the description given me of yourself you must be an English lady, and as I, myself, are from North Wales, I felt anxious to make your acquaintance. Do accompany me to my home, that we may talk over old and new times, and learn to love each other, as I know we shall."

A stranger and a pilgrim as Mrs. Marchmont was in reality, and pledged to follow the leadings of Providence, she felt no hesitation in accepting the kind invitation, and was thus for a few days delivered from the necessity of boarding expenses, at liberty to visit the poor and the afflicted, and ever after retained the wealthy and warm-hearted Mrs. — as an invaluable friend.

This lady and Mrs. Marchmont, in a few days, were on their way to the Post-office, Hester still looking anxiously for intelligence from her daughter, and the missing remittances. In passing, they met

one of the millionaires of the city, a rich merchant from Gloucester, England. An introduction took place, when in a very few words, her new friend alluded to Mrs. M.'s remarkable bereavements, losses by fire, &c., and added that they were then on their way to the Post-office, where she hoped to obtain funds from England. Upon extending his hand at parting, the merchant left in that of Mrs. Marchmont a something, which surprise prevented her from observing, but when he had left, she found it was a five dollar gold piece. Not understanding what it meant, she showed it to Mrs. ———, who told her the gentleman intended it as a present in case of necessity. Mrs. Marchmont begged her to allow her little son, who was with them, to return it immediately, but her friend fearing that her funds were lower than she had acknowledged, remonstrated with her on the expediency of retaining it.

"Ah!" replied Mrs. Marchmont, "have I then sunk so low as to *receive a present from a gentleman*? What would my dear mother say!—indeed I *cannot* keep it—God will provide."

Seeing that Mrs. M.'s feelings were so deeply wounded, the lady sent her son to Mr. ——— with the money, and "Mrs. Marchmont's thanks—but declines accepting it."

The merchant was very angry, and loudly declaimed against "pride and poverty going together. It

was easy to see what blood that woman had boiling in her veins—she'd sooner die from want than let a man know she was poor."

But he was mistaken ; had the donor of the gold piece been a *woman*, it would have been, in her circumstances, gratefully accepted.

There was one circumstance connected with Mrs. Marchmont's appearance, which very much contributed to attract attention ; it was the peculiarity of her garb. Following the custom of her native land, she wore "the widow's band," differing so much from the American style of mourning dress, that persons from England immediately recognized her as a Londoner. But she had worn it in expectation of soon returning to England, not to elicit observation.

Two weeks were spent with this lady in the most agreeable manner, in spiritual conversation, calls of benevolence, and visits of instruction, her kind friend compelling Mrs. M. to remain with her until she could hear from England or be led into some new path of action. At the end of this time, a lady who was herself one of the managers of the Orphan's Asylum, and who had become acquainted with Mrs. Marchmont by means of her hostess, inquired of her in a very delicate manner, if she would be willing to attend on her grand-daughter, who was very ill.

"Her mother," said the lady, "has like yourself suffered much, but Amelia is very low in spirits, and

as you have no particular home, I thought you might be willing to go."

Little thought the lady what daggers the words "*you have no particular home,*" became to the heart of the widowed stranger. After a few hours spent in prayer and in debating the matter with her own mind, Mrs. M. consented to attend on the young lady. For such an office how well had personal afflictions prepared her !

Six weeks were passed by the bedside of the patient, attending to her wants, reading to her from the Bible and works adapted to interest her in the great truths of religion, conversing with her in Christian faithfulness, and praying for the health of her soul as well as her body. Both were granted to Mrs. Marchmont as seals of her labors in the Lord. Amelia rose from her sick bed to go forth in health and strength, and soon after gave herself to the Saviour in a public covenant of faith. She became warmly attached to her kind nurse, seeming always to regard her as a spiritual mother.

Mrs. Marchmont's success in being the instrument of restoring this young lady, opened the door for other and similar requests. She did not refuse, for, to use her own words, "I felt as if the Lord was leading me by a way which I knew not to labor in His cause, for these employments were among the last I should have selected for myself." Mrs. March-

nt always caused it to be understood that when finite intelligence should reach her, she expected, it was the Lord's will, to return to England. But whenever the subject was mentioned, her friends assured her she never would go, for it was evident the Lord had work for her in America.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TIDINGS FROM HOME.

WAITING, still waiting for tidings from home, yet resolved to do her duty by the day and by the hour, Mrs. Marchmont was at the house of a dear friend, whom she was assisting in the care of a sick relative, when a letter arrived—the long anxiously expected letter. Trembling with eagerness she opened it, read a few lines, written in a stranger's hand, and giving a deep groan of anguish, fainted in her chair. The last link was broken which bound her to earth. Lizzie, the gentle child who had shared her sorrows and her Christian joys, the idol of her heart, was laid low beneath the green sod of her childhood's home. As the letter fell from Mrs. Marchmont's hand, her friends flew to her assistance, and after some time, were enabled to restore her to a consciousness of her renewed afflictions. When she became sufficiently composed to read the remainder of the letter, she raised her hands, exclaiming—

"My trouble is greater than I can bear. Oh! how the Lord has punished me for my rebellion of heart."

Soothing words were spoken by those who wept with the stricken woman, but they fell almost unheeded upon her ear, and she gave them the letter which contained the death-blow to her long cherished hopes.

"The letter you wrote to your dear Lizzie, I soon hastened to convey to her, but alas! I found it was too late. - She had gradually declined from the time, when the vessel was reported to be lost, and had just sunk to rest, with your name on her dying lips—'*I am going to meet my mother.*' I have been assured by many that the tenderest care was constantly awarded her, for she was greatly beloved for her sweet and amiable qualities. Nothing was wanting, excepting your presence, to cheer and console her, and she had not pursued her studies, since the sorrowful news of your supposed death. Be assured, my dear afflicted sister, that as regards your child, all has been just as you would yourself have wished it. And then, you have the inexpressible consolation of knowing that she 'sleeps in Jesus,' and you know the promise—'*God will bring her with Him.*' She was buried as one whom many loved and mourned, and she lies by the side of your dear mother.

"From all that I can learn concerning the state of your funds, (and I have, for your sake, made very especial inquiries,) your presence here will be necessary to substantiate your claims. You know, as a *Baptist*, I am not permitted access to your sisters, but from what I can learn, their feelings towards you are unchanged. So that all that remains for you, now, is to return,

and confront those who have tried to defraud you of your property. * * * *

"Of course you must enter upon a law-suit, and no doubt your claims will be warmly contested, but the requisite funds will, I presume, bring all right again." * * * *

For the time, it seemed to Mrs. Marchmont that all her former troubles, and her previous bereavements, were light in comparison with the loss of her "gentle Lizzie." To lose such a daughter, just at an age to be peculiarly a comfort ; to lose her too, without having been permitted to stand by her side in her illness, or to have heard one word from her sweet voice,—seemed too much. Nature rose within, and in the bitterness of its sorrow cried out, "*Why am I thus afflicted ?*" She prayed, but her prayers were those of one plunged in the depths of woe. She felt her faith sinking—she flew to her Bible, and lifted her heart to Jesus, saying, "Lord, save, or I perish." Oh ! it was a long struggle with her heart, and with sorrow, that Hester Marchmont endured ; but finally it passed, and there came to her a vision of One like unto the Son of God, enduring a *life* of sorrow, persecution, and death, not for Himself, but for such as her. Then there were words which He had uttered, "Through much tribulation ye must enter the kingdom."

"Has *He* borne all this for me, and shall the disciple be above the Master?" was the humbled inquiry of the sorrowing believer.

"The Bible! the Bible! Oh, what should I have done if it had not been for the Bible—what should I do *now*, if it were not for that blessed book!" exclaimed the weeping Hester, clasping the word affectionately to her heart.

It was through the Bible and prayer, through grace thus given, Mrs. Marchmont was enabled to conquer her grief. While yet the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak, and the same melancholy which had preyed upon her before, now pervaded her mind. For many days she was incapable of attending to any thing around her; she scarcely partook of her food, and sleep was a stranger to her eyes. Pious friends came to sympathise, to pray with, and to counsel her, but to all she replied—

"God has punished me because of my rebellion of heart—just as He did the Israelites of old,—'He has taken away the desire of mine eyes, and I am left alone.'"

But after a time, she was brought to trust in the Lord, for the promise was whispered to her,—"*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee,*" and was blessed to her spirit. She remembered the vow she had made, when in her past desolation she had read the message in the paper of *salt*, and felt that now her promise must be fulfilled. She must be the Lord's entirely—she must remain in America, and do His work, until it pleased Him to call her home.

Now, must the strength of Christ be made perfect in the weakness of the Christian. Hester Marchmont had passed through the fire seven times tried. *She stood alone upon earth ;* among all its crowds there were none to claim her by the ties of kindred, excepting her sister, and her avaricious cousin. They had discarded her, cast her out, she was no more of them ; and now, she felt called upon to present herself to God, a willing sacrifice—to devote body and soul to works of piety and benevolence. Her means were not wholly gone,—perhaps another remittance from some source would arrive, and she would follow wherever Providence led the way.

From this time, she resolved to abandon all claims to her property in England, and content herself with receiving such remittances as she could obtain, without involving herself in the expenses of a suit at law. She left the whole matter in the hands of God, believing that He would do far better for her than she could for herself.

Mrs. Marchmont could not of course wholly resign her English home and friends. A correspondence with the Baptist brother and sister who had proved themselves her best friends, were still maintained, and she requested them to acquaint her with any thing concerning her sister which might interest her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NEW PHASES OF LIFE.

HESTER Marchmont is a widow. Fourteen times has she been a mother, and of the five who have lived to call her by that sweet name, all are in heaven. She is a stranger, in a strange land. Her purse holds but sufficient for the decencies and necessities of life. She is all alone in the world. Yet she does not fold her hands, and sit down to pine away the life which is still hers. True, she is very sad, and her pale, thin face, tells its own tale of suffering, but still it is calm; and there are moments when her dark eyes brighten as she listens to some word of sympathy, or to the ministrations of the pulpit. She is a Christian, and as such will bear a Christian's cross.

She seeks a home, one which will be her own, in which she may enjoy the liberty of being alone with God, and her comforting, counseling Bible, just when she pleases—in which she can live economically on the moderate sum she possesses, and live

retired from the world. Such an one is offered her in the house of a very respectable family, and to pay the rent, and provide herself with food, she resorts to her old employment of sewing. Many, very many in the crowded cities of this new world, live in this way, just as does Mrs. Marchmont, but few of them have known such homes as once were hers. The taste and refinement of her early days are displayed even here, in this one room, and though it is kitchen, bedroom, and parlor, every thing in, and around it, shows the neatness and order of a well-trained house-keeper. She sits plying her needle, and thoughts of her English home by the Thames, where in childhood she roamed over the lawns,—of her elegant home in the crowded metropolis of the British empire, come thronging into her brain, until her head swims, and her eyes are dim. Does she lay down her work to weep? Oh! no—her little Bible is open by her side, and she remembers that it tells her of “a city built without hands,”—of “a home eternal in the heavens,” where “the streets are of gold,” and where there is “no night, no sin, no sorrow, no crying, and where God himself shall wipe away all tears.” She rises, and kneeling for a moment before God, wraps herself in her street attire, and goes forth to seek the abodes of those whose lot is poverty, ignorance, and distress. Compared with these, how blest is she, and how much brighter looks her lonely room.

Twice in the week, at a certain hour in the afternoon, fifteen or twenty poor women are seated in the widow's room. She teaches them to read, counsels them for their worldly good, labors for their souls, and kneels with them to plead for their salvation. Time rolls on—these poor women have learned to read, slowly, it is true, but surely, the words of Life. From the "Young Men's Bible Society" the widow has obtained a donation as a reward for these poor women, and each departs, the happy owner of a Bible and a hymn book. Such deeds of mercy are the best antidotes for sorrows of the heart. And in their daily performance Mrs. Marchmont found her resignation to the chastisements of love, with which her heavenly Father had afflicted her, greatly strengthened. Each day the prayer, "Thy will be done," was uttered with more of the heart's consent, and in firmer, clearer tones.

Many weeks thus passed. The teacher of a small private school was laid low by illness, and having heard of Mrs. Marchmont's gratuitous instructions to the poor, sent her a request to take charge of her school until she should recover. Mrs. Marchmont hesitated some time, from a feeling of incompetency for the work. Her's had been but a fashionable education, only suited to the life of folly and fashion she had lived in her earlier years. Such light accomplishments, she thought, were out of place in a

school where the elements of a solid education were required. But the persuasions of her friends prevailed, and Mrs. M. took charge of the school. She had no confidence in herself, yet endeavoring faithfully to discharge her duty, her success was surprising. The young lady who had been the teacher, remained ill a long time, and when she recovered, finding both parents and children much gratified with Mrs. M.'s mode of teaching, she proposed to her to continue the school on her own responsibility, as she intended in a short time to remove from the city. Regarding this proposal as an indication of God's will concerning the path of duty, and having become greatly interested in her new avocation, after some deliberation and prayer she consented to enter on the work as a permanent professor. Often when she considered the unfitness of her boarding-school education for the occupation in which she was engaged, and how naturally she had fallen into a method of teaching so acceptable to her pupils and their parents, it being peculiarly her own, seemingly taught her by the Spirit of all good, she exclaimed, in wonder and gratitude, "What hath God wrought?"

The number of her pupils increased daily, and her school acquired such a reputation for success, that the officers of the public schools wished to secure her services in their department. But she preferred to instruct in her own way, and to be responsible to

parents only, and now surely was she blest. Her school afforded her a handsome income, enabling her to enjoy all the comforts and privileges she desired, and to spare to the needy, the cause of the church, and of missions ; it diverted her thoughts from the past, by keeping them constantly exercised for others, and more than all, she had the happiness of doing good to the *souls* of many, as well as promoting their improvement in secular knowledge.

From the time that Mrs. Marchmont found herself blessed with a daily competency, she vowed to the Lord as He saw fit to prosper her, so to devote a certain portion to His cause. Her liberality soon became known, and extensive draughts were made upon it, quite too frequently, her friends thought, for her personal comfort. But remonstrances were useless when duty was the motive to action. "God will provide," was her daily motto.

During one week, especially, an unusual number of calls had been made upon her generosity, to all of which she had cheerfully responded, until Saturday evening came and found her with but five cents in her purse. That evening a poor woman requesting to see her, was shown into her room. Mrs. Marchmont inquired her wishes, and the woman replied—

"I heard you was good to the poor, and I come to you for help."

"And what do you most need?" inquired Mrs. Marchmont."

"Why, ma'am, I've no victuals, nor a bit o' fire wood, nor a mite o' light."

What was to be done? Mrs. M. felt that she could not send her away empty, and yet she had but five cents and her Lord's day dinner. Calling a domestic of the house in which she resided, she requested him to follow the woman with fuel enough to last until Monday; then slipped her five cents into her hand, and wrapping up her Sunday's provision, gave it to her likewise. When the servant came home, he told his mistress, Mrs. B——, of the occurrence, and she went immediately to Mrs. Marchmont with,

"My dear lady, do forgive me—but you are *too* liberal, you will *ruin* yourself, and you will never find those who will do as much for you."

Mrs. Marchmont smiled, saying, "You know my motto—'The Lord will provide.'"

Mrs. B—— little thought Mrs. Marchmont had robbed herself of her dinner. Sustaining herself with what light food she could gather on Lord's day, she went to her school on Monday morning penniless, but during the forenoon received five invitations to dinner from the parents of different pupils. Fearing to accept of one, lest the others should feel offended, she declined all, and resolved to devote the dinner hour to visiting the sick, but had scarcely got

to the door to leave for the purpose, when one after another messengers arrived, bringing her the dinners she had declined.

"Look here," said she to Mrs. B——, pointing to the provisions upon the table, "see how the Lord has repaid me! Is it not more blessed to give than to receive?"

Mrs. Marchmont was one Lord's day evening sitting in church, just before the commencement of the services, when a person came to her seat and whispered that a dying man wished to see her immediately. She arose, and asking a lady friend to accompany her, followed the messenger, the sick man being one whom she had frequently visited, directing him to seek pardon from the Redeemer of sinners. He seemed to be sinking very rapidly, but glad to see Mrs. Marchmont. She conversed a little with him, and then at his request, offered prayer for his salvation. After a few moments he revived, and surprised her greatly by saying—

"Madam, I have sent for you to make my will."

Utterly astonished, and there being no time to remonstrate or send for a lawyer, she proceeded, with her friend remaining as a witness, to draw up a will according to his directions, in the best manner she could. Among the bequests was a very handsome one to herself. After saying a few words of comfort and counsel, she left him, hoping he might survive

till morning. The man was an eccentric individual who lived almost alone—had been ill a long time, and with a mutual friend Mrs. Marchmont had been induced to visit him, and had succeeded in leading him to think of his soul, when the conversation of others had been in vain.

The next morning she requested a lawyer to accompany her to the sick man's residence, to ascertain if the will was correctly drawn. The man was still living, and during the process of rewriting the document, Mrs. Marchmont inquired if he was willing she should make a transfer of the legacy he had given her! He consented, and she requested the lawyer to place instead of her name those of two benevolent institutions in the city, to which she had long intended to contribute, but had not thought her means sufficient to do so. Her wishes were now accomplished by a very remarkable providence.

During her past residence in the city, Mrs. Marchmont had, in the company of friends, attended upon the worship of the different evangelical churches, but had never thought of uniting with those of her own faith, on account of her purpose to return to England when the way should be opened. Although she had decided to remain in America until such should be the case, her heart still cherished a secret hope that some unexpected event would recall her to her native land.

Mrs. Marchmont had from her first entering upon the work of an instructress, considered it her duty to open her school each morning with reading from the Bible and prayer. She was thus engaged one morning when a deacon of a Baptist church in the city, having a message for one of her pupils, came to the door of her school-room. He was about to knock, when his ear was arrested by the voice of prayer. Quietly he listened until all was over, and then, having been invited to enter, he at once expressed to Mrs. Marchmont his gratification at what he had unintentionally overheard.

"I suppose, madam," said he, "you are in connection with some church?"

"Not in this country, but in England I am a member."

"Will you favor me with your name?"

"Mrs. Marchmont."

"Why, you are the strange lady who is going about doing good!"

"I do not know that I can do any *good*, but I love to visit the abodes of distress."

"Excuse me, madam, may I further inquire of what church in England you are a member?"

"Of Rev. Mr. Stephenson's—Baptist."

"Indeed! is it possible? I too am a Baptist. But I will not now detain you longer. God bless you,

Mrs. Marchmont, and speed the work in which you are engaged. Good morning."

This unexpected interview left a pleasant impression on the mind of the widow, and she went through her routine of duties cheered by the voice of Christian fellowship still leaving its music in her ears.

At noon she was surprised by a call from a gentleman who introduced himself as Mr. ———, pastor of the ——— street church. He said he called at the request of deacon ———, whom he had seen that morning, and to know why, as a Baptist, she had not cast in her lot with some sister church?

Mrs. Marchmont replied, "It is with sorrow that I say it, but my reception has not been such as a widow in a strange land might have hoped to meet from fellow Christians."

"How so, my sister?" inquired the pastor.

Mrs. Marchmont then related the tale of her visit to the residence of the Rev. ———, and his cold and contemptuous treatment, which had disheartened her from again seeking to become acquainted with the Baptists of C——.

"Well, sister, that is a sad tale, truly; but now, supposing you come and cast in your lot with us. Your character has long been known to us, though not your name, and the letters which you have are sufficient."

"I will attend upon your worship gladly, but it

seems as if I should return to England—it is almost useless to enter into any new connection.”

“Have you any immediate prospect of returning to England?”

“No, sir,—I cannot go until further remittances arrive.”

“But are you not willing to labor while here—and do you not think it is required of you to throw your influence and exertion into the church, while you remain? Suppose you come to the Hall, on —— street, to-night; I do not think you will find the brethren and sisters will slight you. They will gladly welcome an European sister, and besides, we have some excellent members from England.”

“Very well, sir, I will meet with you to-night, and here are the letters of introduction. You know that by fire I lost all which I brought with me from England, but here is one I have received from a Baptist brother in England, since I have been here.”

Evening came, and Mrs. Marchmont went as directed, to the Hall, on —— street. She found the meeting was of the church for prayer and conference. Several prayers had been offered, and it was near the usual time for closing the services, when the pastor rose and stated, that there was present a sister from England, whose Christian experience, no doubt, all the brethren and sisters would be glad to hear.—

"Sister Marchmont," he said, "will you tell us how you came to love the Lord Jesus?"

Thus addressed, the long pent up fountains of her soul opened anew, and with much emotion, Mrs. Marchmont related the story of the teachings of the Bible convicting her of sin, and of her long search after the meaning of the Saviour's command, "believe and be baptized." A very brief outline of her trials and bereavements, completed her narrative. Flowing tears attested the sympathy of those who heard it. Again the pastor spoke,—

"Sister Marchmont, you are alone in our land, and our city; will you not become one of us as a church, give us your prayers and your labors, and receive our Christian fellowship and watch-care, so long as you shall remain here?"

Mrs. Marchmont, in a voice trembling with emotion, replied—

"Most gladly, if you will receive me."

"Now, brethren and sisters, you who are in favor of receiving Mrs. Marchmont into our communion and fellowship, may signify it by raising your hands."

The right hand of every member there was raised, and so ready and unanimous was the vote, that Mrs. Marchmont was astonished. After prayer and singing "From whence does this reunion arise," the meeting closed, and Mrs. Marchmont was

surrounded by a throng of brethren and sisters who grasped her hands, and most affectionately bade her welcome to the church. A joy, to which she had for a long time been a stranger, was her's that evening, and she returned to her room to give thanks to God for shedding this new ray of light upon her hitherto lonely path. Upon the next Lord's day, the pastor publicly presented her with the right hand of fellowship, and Mrs. Marchmont once more partook of the Lord's Supper with those who like herself had followed him in baptism. Does not the scriptural simplicity of the Baptist church commend itself to the heart of a true believer, when contrasted with modes and forms, and innumerable ceremonies which fetter the spirit, and leave it too little of that liberty wherewith Christ makes free? And yet there is in this very simplicity, a surer safeguard to the purity of the church, than in all the "*Prayer-Books*" and "*Disciplines*" which man can invent.

Mrs. Marchmont, for some time kept on the even tenor of her way, cheered now by the new associations and Christian friendships she had formed. Upon visiting the post-office, one Saturday afternoon, a package was handed her—the post-mark was "London, Eng." How wildly did her heart throb—and her limbs trembled as she hurriedly sought the seclusion of her little home to learn its contents. The

first object which met her eyes, was a remittance of a sum sufficient to render her circumstances easy for some time, or if she wished, to return to England. Accompanying this, was a letter from her sister Hannah, full of affection, and expressions of regret for the past.

“HESTER—

Do you remember when Mary and I made so much fun of you for being a Baptist, and your husband stopped us, and said, ‘Let Wide-awake alone, she did no more than her Bible told her to?’ You remember it well, we looked into the New Testament the next Sunday, just to see if we could not make out you had not read it right, but we found there the very words, ‘He that believeth, and is baptized,’—you know the rest. We were mad, though convicted, and so we went on as we had done, determined not to let in the light. Then our mother died, and you know she declared, after you had left England, that you had done just right, and that the Baptists were the only persons who read the Bible understandingly. Then came word of your troubles, and I was so angry that I wrote that dreadful letter. But you will forgive me, I know, for though I can never forgive myself, yet I trust God has long since forgiven me. But after your little Lizzie died, I could hold out no longer, and then Mary and I went to the Baptist church, and what we heard there convinced us of our lost condition. Oh! Hester, what a terrible thing is a guilty conscience! what a blessed thing is saving grace! Mary and I read our Bibles daily; we tried to pray; we went to see your friends, and took counsel with them. At last, Hester, my dear sister, my much-abused, persecuted, patient sister, we both found the Saviour—and we have both been baptized into the image of His death and resurrection. And the

remembrance of your forbearance, your faithfulness, and your Christian walk, was the main instrument in leading us to our Bibles and to repentance. I say this for your comfort and encouragement, though I cannot write fully concerning our Christian experience, for my hands are full with my family cares and religious duties. Oh! how much time I have lost in the service of the world! * * * I have united with the Baptist church in the City-Roads, where Rev. Mr. Swan is pastor; Mary has joined that at Maize Pond; the pastor is Rev. Mr. Denham. Mary unites with me in asking your forgiveness and love, and sends you, she says, a heart full of love—but she never writes, you know, it is a task she always disliked. * * * Anything that we can do for you, dear Hester, we will with pleasure, and now you must write often. We send you a remittance, hoping soon to see your face once more in our own dear England. The money in Chancery is stopt by G—— R——, until his youngest child comes of age, so that unless you come, I fear you will be robbed of your rights irrecoverably. * * *.”

Much more did the letter contain, and accompanying it was a letter from a Baptist friend, which told of the joy she experienced in the conversion of Mrs. Marchmont's sisters to the true faith. Ah! what a feast of joy was contained in that package, and what tears of happiness did the widowed stranger shed. How bright now looked her English home! yet there were shadows there too—the shadows of the grave are upon the greenest soils.

Mrs. Marchmont had now in her possession sufficient to enable her to return to England, but her school had just commenced a new term, and she

could not break so suddenly away from her interesting charge. And then, too, her new church associations had wound themselves very closely around her heart, so that the ties that bound her to America seemed stronger now than those of her native land. So she laid the matter to rest for a time, determined to be guided in her course by the leadings of duty and Providence.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE.—CHOLERA SCENES.

It was in a pleasant circle of friends gathered within the parlor of a good Baptist sister, that the Rev. Evan Llewellyn first met Mrs. Marchmont. He was pastor of a Welsh Baptist church, a well-educated, deeply pious man, and one greatly beloved by his church and fellow-Christians. His wife had long since slept in her grave, and he was childless also, and like Mrs. Marchmont, he had none in America to claim as kindred. Her story was known to him by means of a mutual friend, and of her character he had often heard. A desire for her acquaintance was gratified by a preconcerted introduction, quite unknown to Mrs. Marchmont, who was well acquainted with his character as a man, and had frequently heard him preach. The acquaintance commenced was very pleasantly continued. Similarity of circumstances, tastes and sentiments, formed a bond of union between these two hearts, and Mrs. March-

mont was urged to relinquish her school, and become once more a wife. After suitable reflection, and seeking to learn the will of God, she consented, and those who had for many years traveled as pilgrims amid the paths of sorrow, joined their hands and hearts to descend together the vale of life, and together pass the evening of their days. What a contrast did busy memory draw before the vision of the widow-bride on the evening when she assumed a new name, and new relations in life. The first who called her wife—how had he strewed thorns in her path to eternal life—the second, how would he urge her up the shining path, and support her over the rough way of the Christian's life-journey. Mentally she prayed, "God grant we may help each other to serve the Lord more faithfully."

The situation upon which Mrs. Llewellyn had entered, was one which required all her energies, physical and mental, and her husband soon found her a help-meet indeed. As the pastor of a large church he had greatly needed a companion, and one more suitable, or more efficient he could not have selected. She became his confidant, his adviser, his nurse, and his housekeeper. One great use of adversity had been the lessons of economy it had taught—a virtue truly indispensable in a minister's wife. Whenever she could save his funds, or his personal labors and assume them herself, she cheerfully did so, that he

might give himself wholly to the ministry. But her old haunts of labor were not relinquished. She still visited where as an unknown stranger she had often crossed their thresholds with messages of love, and works of mercy. She was happy because she was active, for activity is the health of the soul, as it is that of the body.

There are few who do not remember the terrible scourge, of the year 'FORTY-TWO. Cholera raged in every part of the city of C——, and its victims were found in every age and condition of life. Mrs. Marchmont was one among the many Christians of C——, who braving the fear of death, devoted themselves to the care of the sick and dying. Day after day, and night after night, found her in the midst of the plague, engaged in the most mournful and revolting duties. Many a poor victim, deserted by friends and neighbors, found the minister's wife by her side administering the remedies, and praying for the soul while she attended to the body. Many were the eyes she closed in their last long sleep, and many were the bodies she prepared for hasty burial—and many too under her care recovered, to bless God they ever saw her. The most thrilling scenes were daily witnessed, and occurrences too heart-rending to describe.

Mr. Llewellyn and his wife were returning, early one morning, from a scene of suffering and death,

when on passing the residence of a family they had well known, they heard a deep groan, the nature of which they too well foreboded.

"Oh ! dear, our friends here must have been seized," said Mrs. Llewellyn—"we must certainly go in."

They rang at the front door,—no one came—they tried the lock, it was fastened—they descended to the basement, it could not be opened—all was silence, except at intervals that sickening groan. They went round to the back door, but could hear nothing, neither could find entrance.

"I cannot go away—I will get in," said Mrs. L. "Now, my husband, you raise this window ; I am light, and you can lift me up to it."

This was done, and then Mrs. L. opened the door, and admitted her husband—all was vacancy, the furniture was gone, and through the empty house again sounded that hollow groan. Swiftly finding their way whence it proceeded, they found in the second-story, a man alone upon a bed—and in the last stage of cholera.

"Oh ! this is poor brother B——," exclaimed Mr. L.

"Yes, I am he,"—was the sad, faint reply of the wretched sufferer.

There was no time to ask how he came there, or why he was alone, but each addressed themselves to

the work of saving him. He was a young Baptist preacher, who had visited the city, expecting to receive a call from some church. There being no one in the house of Mr. C——, who had left for the country, he had concluded to remain, and occupy his room still, trusting to escape the dreaded pestilence. But he had been seized at day-light, and but for the providence of God in sending Mr. and Mrs. L. he might have died alone, his body unburied by Christians, and his grave unknown. Mr. and Mrs. Llewellyn exerted all their energies to save this Christian brother's life, but in vain, and he was taken to a better world. A Christian burial was given him, though hastily performed, and attended by few. Thus speedily closed the labors of one just entered on his Master's work.

No rest was allowed to Mrs. L. during the six weeks prevalence of this terrible plague. So repeated were the calls made upon her, that she could neither eat, sleep, or find time to change her clothing. Often when she had laid down, hoping to obtain a brief repose, some urgent message would arrive from the dying.

"My dear Hester, you cannot go, you will die yourself," on such occasions remonstrated her husband.

"I *must* go ; I could not die in peace if I refused

to do my duty ;" and so day after day she still labored on.

At last these scenes of sorrow subsided, and health came once more to the city of C——. But she who had passed unharmed through the pestilence now experienced a reaction, and the consequence of such long-continued excitement was an attack of nervous fever, which continued for many weeks, and brought her close to the verge of the grave. By the blessing of God upon the care and attention of her devoted husband and friends, she was finally enabled to rise from her bed, but it was with the loss of an eye, which the physician ascribed to her long-continued night-watches and absence of sleep. The eye was exquisitely painful, and had wept itself away—but during most of her illness she had been mercifully unconscious, but now in her convalescence she was keenly alive to this new agony. The best medical skill in the city was employed, but not the slightest alleviation could be obtained. She was informed that not until the eye itself was wholly destroyed could she expect to be free from daily anguish. To add to this affliction, her native strength of constitution seemed to have deserted her entirely, so that she remained unable to walk abroad even for the shortest distance.

"Ah! Hester," said her husband to her one day, "you forgot the dying injunction of your friend,

Miss A——, for in your earnestness to do good, you have nearly destroyed your earthly *temple*."

"But, my dear husband, I do not regret it—I should not have *dared* to do otherwise. How could I have gone to the Judgment seat with their reproaches ringing in my ears—'No man cared for my soul!' This life will soon end, and I shall have rest forever in that world where there is no night and no sickness."

Finding that Mrs. L. did not recover her strength under the usual remedies, the physicians gave it as their opinion that unless she was removed to the country, and would reside there permanently, her days on earth would be few. Mr. L. himself had long coveted the quiet and seclusion of a country pastor's life, and most cheerfully acceded to the advice, provided his church in the city could obtain another pastor. With many regrets they accepted his resignation, and a situation in a small village was obtained until matters could be more permanently arranged. Mrs. L.'s health slowly but surely improved by the change, and her husband was soon enabled to look about him for a field of continuous labor and a home.

CHAPTER XXVI.

REMOVAL.—CORRESPONDENCE.

March 23, 18—.

‘MY VERY DEAR SISTER—

As well as my poor eye will allow me, I will write you a few words. My indisposition returned last week, and I could do very little but lie on my bed, and pray to the Lord to give me grace to suffer all His will. I am now better, and we leave here to-morrow, to visit a church to which Mr. L. has been invited. It appears to us the call is of the Lord, for we know not the people nor the place, but like one of old, we go out not knowing whither. May the Spirit of our Divine Master go with us, and then all will be well. We shall probably be absent three weeks.

HESTER L.”

May 24, 18—.

“This is the very first day that I possibly could take to tell you our whereabouts and say ‘How do you do.’ After a very pleasant visit with our friends, and the dear church in A——, we arrived here on last Thursday week, but owing to the delay of our letters to the brethren here, our goods had not arrived, consequently we could do nothing until this day week, when we commenced unpacking. I found the labor very severe, but we are now, through mercy, again at *home*, and hope to remain so

as long as Mr. L. shall feel that his work is here. We are in the country, and our nearest neighbor lives at the distance of three fields from us. The country is at this time delightfully pleasant, and we enjoy the change. The church with which we are connected, and who are mostly our neighbors, are simple-hearted, kind people, but the best trait in their character is, *they read their Bibles*, and people that read God's word, cannot help praying. This must be a short note. My dear husband sends his best wishes, and says 'Raise your standard high,' and the Lord bless you all.

H. M. L."

July 13, —.

"I assure you I have felt the heat of the weather in its greatest degree, for our house is not, as you suppose, embowered in trees, but we live in the sun from its rising to its setting. We are situated on a hill, with about an acre cleared all around it, and not so much as one tree to shade our dwelling; nor even the spring-house at the foot of the hill. Otherwise this is a very rocky and woody country. This house was the only one we could obtain at present. My dear husband's field of labor is very large, and for miles we have to travel through the woods, and over rocks, where in some parts there has never been a vehicle before our own, for men and women ride on horseback. The country is pleasant, and the society of my dear husband is doubly precious, for I assure you I have no other. The families in connection with the church are very large, but the wives and daughters work very hard, indeed harder than the men, for they all assist more or less in the field, and every house has its spinning-wheels and looms, so that from shearing the sheep, which many of the women here do, until the wool is in the form of clothing, they have to see to it. They are very hospitable, and give us great welcomes, and they deem it a favor for us to visit

them. I take my knitting and sewing wherever I go, as there are none to converse with me, for I do not think I have met with half a dozen who ever read six pages of a book in their lives. The Bible is read morning and evening, and on the Lord's day, but they know nothing of any publications whatever. I have endeavored to convince some of them of the necessity of improving their minds, but without effect. Their answers are—'What time have we for reading?' 'All we can get time to read is the Bible, and hardly that.' And yet their reading of the good book does not seem to quicken them to a zealous spirit, like unto their Divine Master.

We have two families within a mile and a quarter of us, who are very wealthy, but to see them on a week day, you would not think them worth a dime. Picture to yourself wealthy men in ———, walking with one leg of their pantaloons in the boot, and the other carelessly pushed in one side at the top ; the boots themselves have perhaps never been blackened since they were new. The wives go with handkerchiefs tied around their heads, like the colored women of the South and the cities ; wear neither shoes nor stockings, a quilted skirt, and an old night-gown. Their homes are comfortable and substantial, and their tables are always furnished with a profusion of the bounties of the field and the store-room, to which they welcome whoever may happen to turn in. Now just fancy *these* women appearing at church in a gold watch and chain, and a silk dress, (I mean these two wealthy families ;) the effect on my mind is bad, to me it looks out of place."

August 6th, 18—.

"This is the first day of our quarterly meeting. We have just returned from the services, and I am glad to say, we have one candidate for baptism to-morrow, and others are inquiring the

way. May the Lord smile on His word in these parts, and I hope there will be 'a shaking among the dry bones;' when the Lord says 'Live!' then our hearts will rejoice. You are aware that Mr. L. has charge of the church in this neighborhood, and of that at H——, eight miles distant, preaching to each on alternate sabbaths. Last night our quarterly meeting closed. We have had additions to each church; baptisms at half-past nine in the morning, and preaching at eleven. Coming so great a distance, there were about five hundred persons in each house to preach to, and administer the Supper also. Several others are very serious in respect to divine things—no doubt one and all felt it good to be there. My dear sister, continue to pray for us, that the work may go on. I trust we feel humbly thankful that the labors of my dear L. have not been in vain in the Lord.

HESTER."

August 15th, —.

"It seems a long time since I was able to write to you. My eyes have been so bad that I was obliged to keep them bandaged much of the time. My dear husband has been so much engaged at the meeting of the association, that he could not find quiet long enough to write. It was a precious meeting he says."

August 30th, —.

"I am sorry to say that my dear L. is quite sick with dysentery, and is under medical treatment. I trust in the Almighty for the medicine to be blest. I do wish to bow in submission to the will of my God, and it is with trembling I approach the mercy-seat, to ask my God and Saviour to spare his life. I do not want to be selfish, but I fear there is selfishness at the bottom of my earnest cry, 'oh! spare his life!' I trust I have committed his

case into the hands of the Great Physician, assured that he will do all things well. * * * *

"I do, with yourself, most earnestly desire the conversion of your dear husband and children. I have thought, many times, of the great sin your husband is committing, after Christ has given him evidence that he has found favor in His sight, that he will not submit to baptism, and so fulfill the commands of Christ, by showing forth His death until He comes. Let us take care lest we should deny Christ, and He should be ashamed of us when He comes to make up His jewels. * * *

"I will write soon to your dear children.—May your faith strengthen daily—God bless you all.

"P. S. My dear L. is a little better this afternoon."

September 16th, —.

"I know you have been very anxious to hear from us—as my last was written when we were in affliction—I am thankful we are better, though not in health. One cause of my own infirmity is this—It was generally known that my dear L. was ill of that direful disease which has swept multitudes, in these parts, away, and that I administered to him the Homœopathic treatment, (he could never be prevailed upon to have any other,) and through the blessing of God he was cured. The disease spread in the neighborhood with such violence, and death after death often ensued ; I was requested to visit and treat several serious cases, where the doctors in Allopathy had given them up. I felt the weight of responsibility there was resting upon me, as some were so low it seemed impossible to raise them, but it was the Lord called me to it, and He stood by me and blessed the means to sixteen precious souls. All have done well, and are on their feet again, while the doctors, for want of experience, have lost twelve, and not one of these had so lived on earth as to secure life ever-

lasting. My past experiences in illness have been many, and sad, but the Lord can bring good out of evil."

November 21st, —.

"Once more we have to rejoice in the Lord. The labors of my dear husband have been owned, and two souls given him, one in each church—Our meetings were solemn, but no excitement. The blessed Spirit moved the hearts of the hearers peaceably—'not by might or by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.' We had a remarkably solemn day yesterday—Dear L. improved the death of two young men, first cousins on the mother's side. One left his home with his brother, a Baptist minister, in Alabama, about nine months ago; the other was in California only six months—and both have died—both youths beloved by all who knew them. Their mothers are daughters of the first settlers in this section, and sisters in the same church. Mr. L. addressed the young, especially, from 'Seek first the kingdom of God, &c.' He felt his subject deeply, and was very earnest, and home-spoken in his remarks. God hear our prayers, and water the word with the dews of Heaven, then we shall have a glorious harvest.

"I am sorry that you are suffering so long, and so severely with disease—but, my dear sister, it is from the Lord, and I believe you can say, 'Let Him do what seemeth Him good.' I do wish, my dear, you would try to see the hand of the Lord in staying you in C——; depend upon it you are just where the good Being would have you to be, and much of your pain is aggravated by grieving on account of your location.

"Let us pray earnestly for grace to be conformed to our lot. I am not, my sister, without *the thorn*, and have felt much the want of congenial spirits, other than my husband; but I am sure the Lord places his children just where He would have.

them. I fear were you to remove to S——, your dear husband would soon be a widower, and his children motherless. Bear with what I have written, for it is all in love for you in this life, as well as that to come. It has been said, if I would lean to the ways of the people, I should please very well; but I was early taught to buy the truth and sell it not, and I assure you I would never forfeit truth to please any one, especially those who have two sides to their professions. * * *

“We leave home to-day, for a journey of thirty-six miles, to try to gather a scattered church.”

Jan. 28, —.

“Your letters are always welcome visitors to me. You complain for want of news, but yours are always filled with interest, and *the every-day news, I trust, does not suit you or me.* You wish to know how we are and how we spend our time. Through great mercy we enjoy health at present. Our time is spent thus—some days of every week in visiting members of our church and congregation, for prayer and conversation; and the days I am at home, I set apart a portion of time for self-examination and communion with God and my own heart. I sometimes enjoy such soul-reviving times that I feel what the poet meant when he wrote—

‘I could sit and sing myself away to everlasting bliss.’

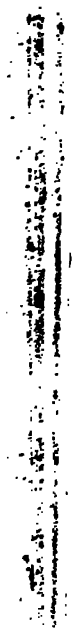
But still the nearer I try to live to my Redeemer the more I tremble at my depravity of heart.

As a church and a people we have peace and love among us. There is no very great evidence of an outpouring, but there is a good state of feeling in our midst. I trust as God’s dependent creatures, we are contented with our lot, though far inferior to many we know, who are always wanting more. *** I have not read the book you speak of. I do not myself approve of works

of fiction to enforce truth. I always thought the blessed Gospel was so plain on the subject of baptism, that if people would only read it, they could not believe in any thing but *believer's* baptism by immersion. *** I had no trouble on the subject of close-communion, having never heard it discussed. We have open communion churches in England, but I knew of none in London—we looked more to doctrine. I am astonished that any one in America should know so little as to think that Baptists are any more close-communion than others. Ask any other denomination if they ever partake with any body besides their own, and they will tell you 'No.' It is *close Baptism*, I allow. Ask our Pedobaptist friends if they would admit any person to sit down to the Lord's table with them unless they had administered baptism to them according to their mode—they will tell you 'No.' Turn to the fourth chapter of Leviticus, by reading the sixth and seventh verses you will find the three words 'dip,' 'sprinkle,' and 'pour'—then do as I did—go to a Hebrew scholar, and he will give you the English of them to your full satisfaction. *** We have, through the mercy of God, obtained another house and lot, a very convenient little home. When we commenced to build it, all hands turned out to help—of other denominations too, so that our house was soon on the way. When finished so as to move into it, the neighbors brought us of their substance from thirty-five to forty dollars worth, and we had as many as eighty-three calls, welcoming us into our new habitation. Mr. L. has decided to ask them no salary for his services, but to accept whatever they choose to bring. If it had not been for our own private means, we could not have built a home, but now that anxiety is removed. Then we have bought twenty acres of the land around it. There are shade trees about the house, and there are fields of corn and wheat, sugar-trees, and a little orchard, and an excellent spring. Then we have our

horse, our cow, pigs, chickens, &c., quite a family you know
This is our American home. Come and see us—I long to bid
you welcome.”

When Hester Llewellyn and her much valued
husband shall have joined the company of the re-
deemed, and the songs of the ransomed shall be theirs
in heaven—then perhaps we may hear from them
again—and may learn of the evening of their earthly
days—and whether their lamps went out in joy or
in sorrow.





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

